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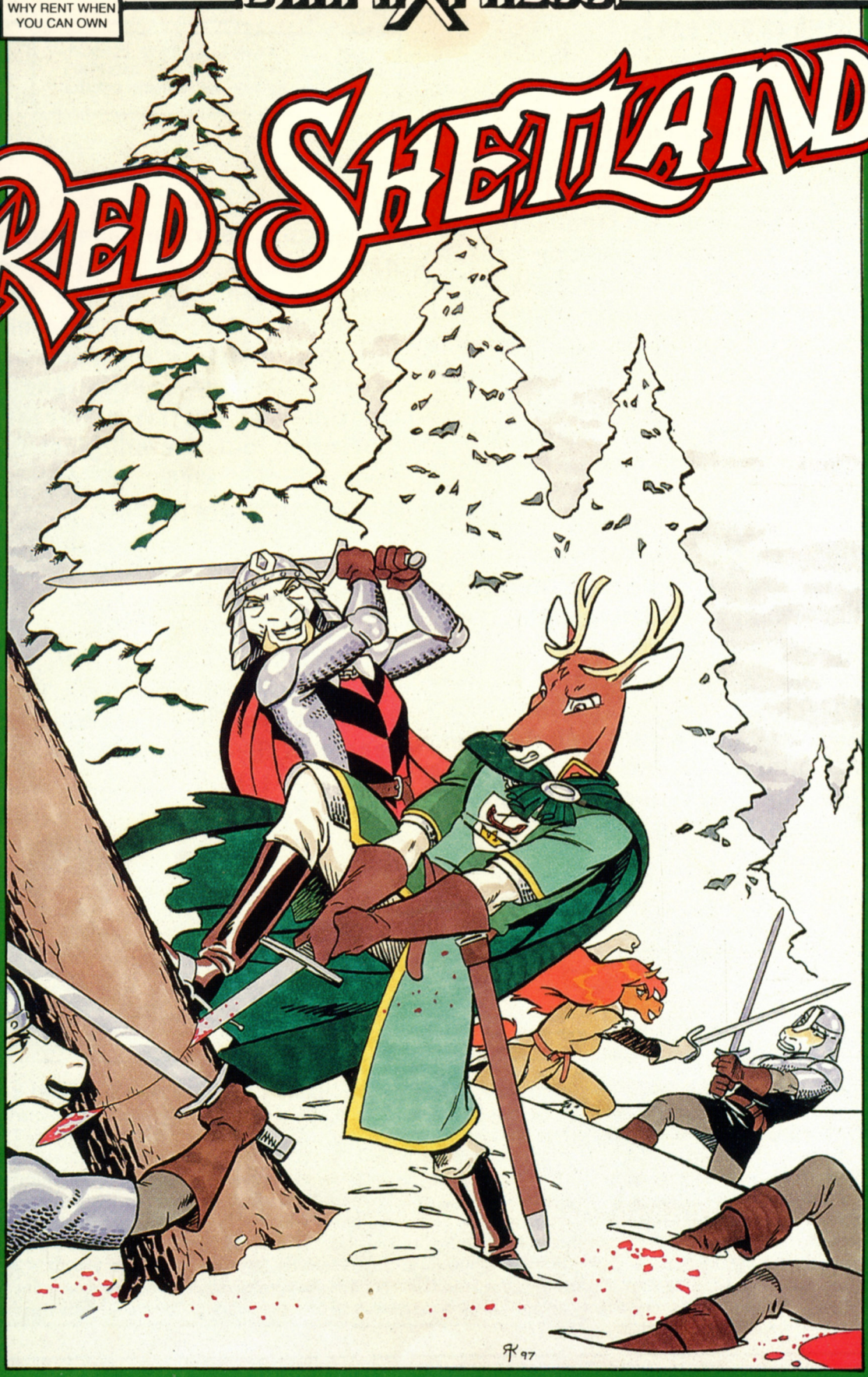
WHY RENT WHEN YOU CAN OWN

GRAPHXPRESS

# RED SHETLAND



# Editorial

From the head bozo - Jim Groat and his lovely wife - Rebekah Groat

Well, we are late again. The co-creator, Richard Konkle, kept on being sent on assignment on some other continent for 3 to 6 months at a crack. This meant a serious delay in the pencils and layouts, and eventually, the inking. But here we finally are, in your hands. We apologize for the delay.

This past fall we suffered a great loss, the unexpected death of Mark Wallace (William Blackfox). He worked on many an issue of Equine and also helped on Red Shetland. He always welcomed visitors and would regale them for hours with his stories of the SCA. He was loved by all and will be greatly missed.

In the past year we have had two new t-shirts out. You can see them at the end of the book. These were to replace two older designs, which have now been retired. We plan to have another color design out later this year. When it is out, we will post it on our web site, www.graphxpress.com.

Once again we mention Ed Zolna and his fine business.

Mailbox Books
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And thanks to the wonderful people at Albany Anthro Con, who run an A-1 convention in July in Albany, New York.

Our Fine Legal Staff

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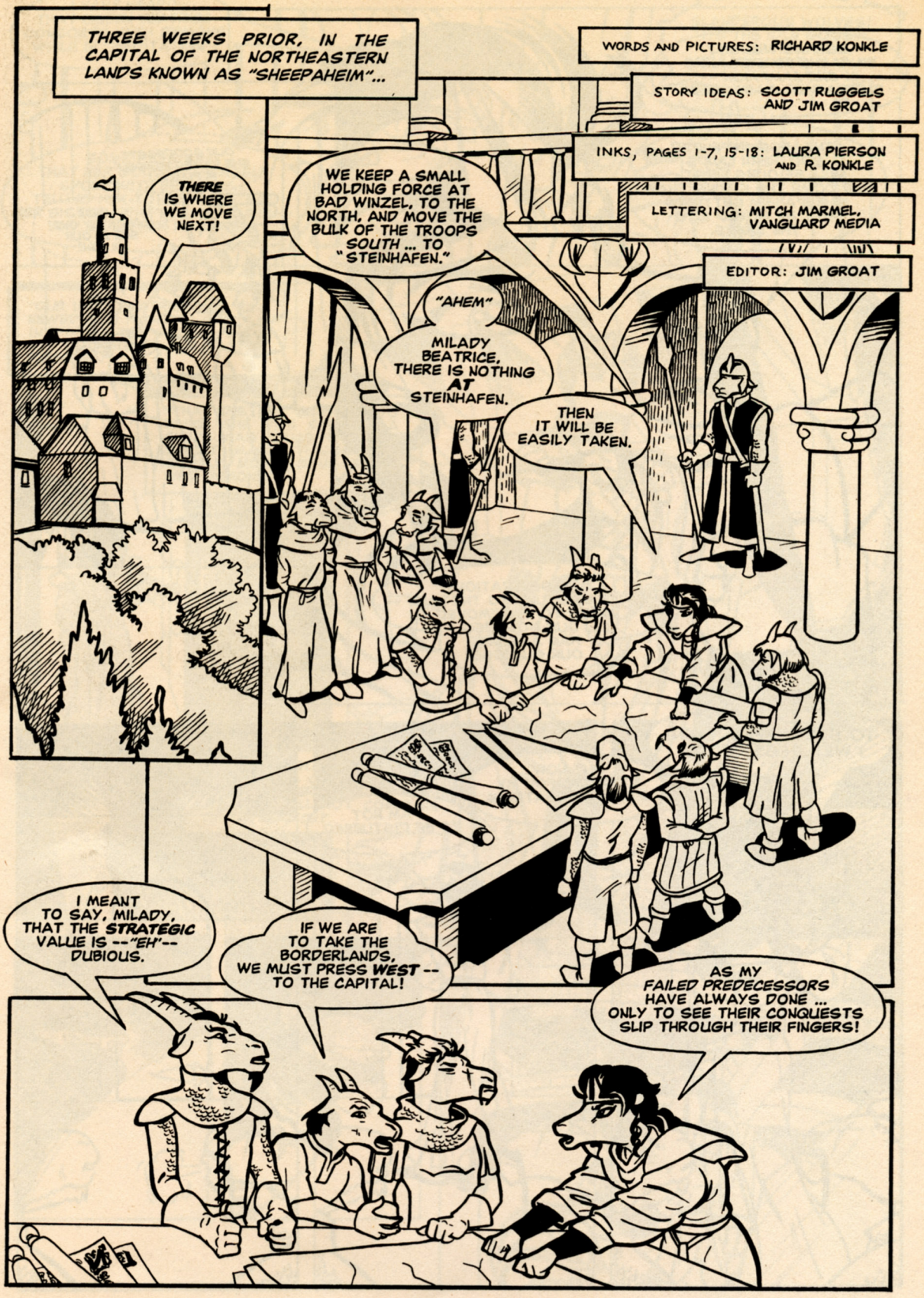
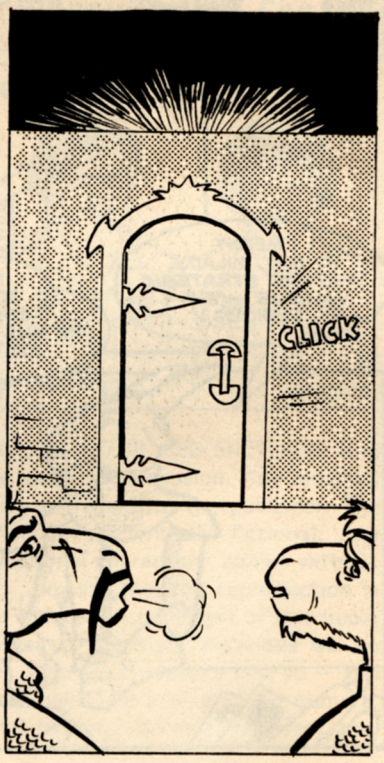
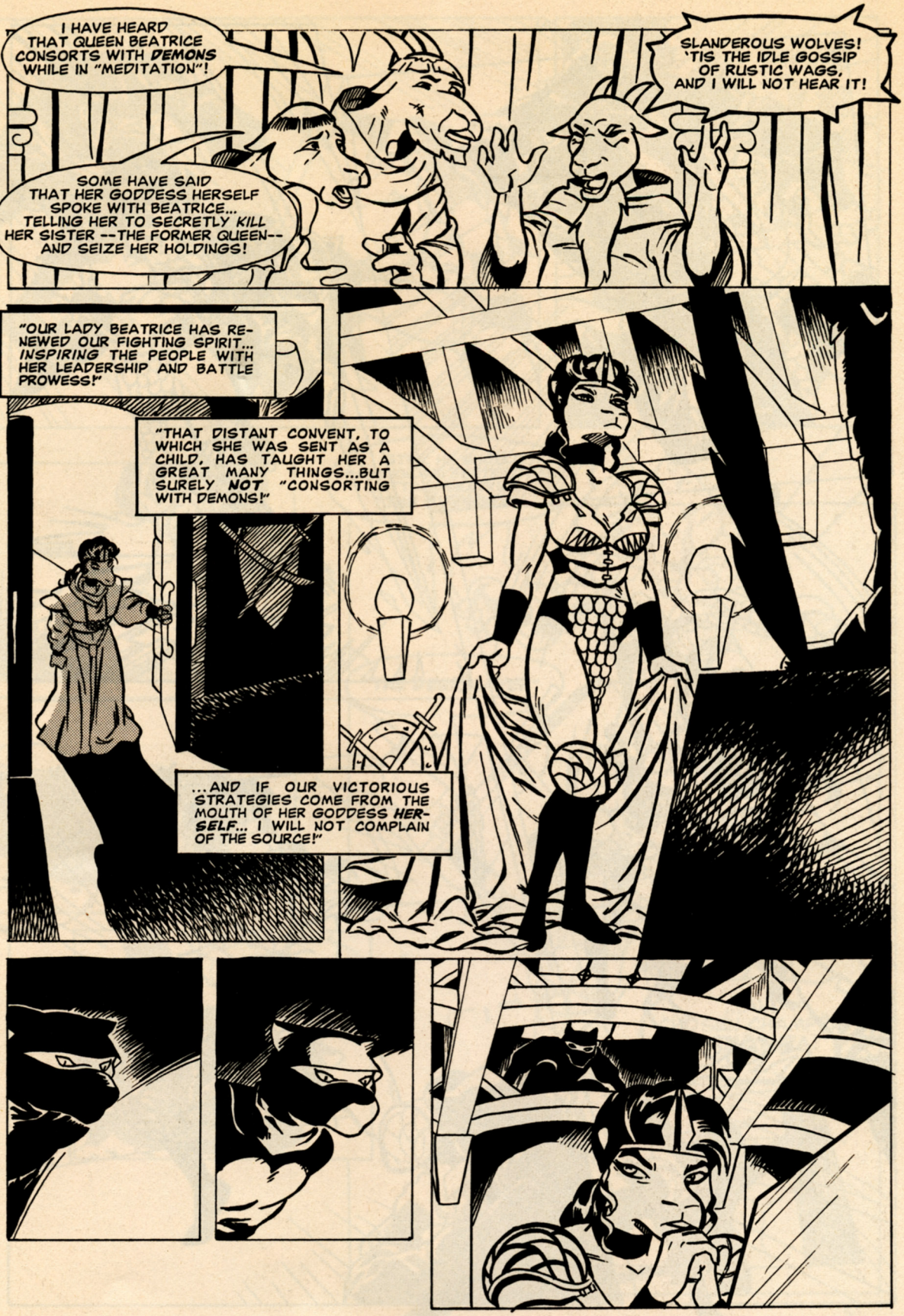

THREE WEEKS PRIOR, IN THE CAPITAL OF THE NORTHEASTERN LANDS KNOWN AS "SHEEPAHEIM"...
WORDS AND PICTURES: RICHARD KONKLE
STORY IDEAS: SCOTT RUGGELS AND JIM GROAT
INKS, PAGES 1-7, 15-18: LAURA PIERSON AND R. KONKLE
LETTERING: MITCH MARMEL, VANGUARD MEDIA
EDITOR: JIM GROAT
THERE IS WHERE WE MOVE NEXT!
WE KEEP A SMALL HOLDING FORCE AT BAD WINZEL, TO THE NORTH, AND MOVE THE BULK OF THE TROOPS SOUTH ... TO "STEINHAFEN."
"AHEM"
MILADY BEATRICE, THERE IS NOTHING AT STEINHAFEN.
THEN IT WILL BE EASILY TAKEN.
I MEANT TO SAY, MILADY, THAT THE STRATEGIC VALUE IS --"EH"-- DUBIOUS.
IF WE ARE TO TAKE THE BORDERLANDS, WE MUST PRESS WEST -- TO THE CAPITAL!
AS MY FAILED PREDECESSORS HAVE ALWAYS DONE ... ONLY TO SEE THEIR CONQUESTS SLIP THROUGH THEIR FINGERS!

NO... WE WILL NOT TAKE THE BORDERLANDS IN ONE CAMPAIGN -- BUT RATHER, BY DEGREES.
THE LESS-DEFENDED SOUTHERN LANDS WILL BE OURS FIRST ... AND COME THE SPRING THAW, SHEEPAHEIM SETTLERS WILL BE MOVED INTO THE LANDS.
IN A GENERATION, WE WILL BE BOUND TO THE LAND -- NEVER TO BE REMOVED. OUR GODDESS HAS ASSURED OUR SUCCESS!
"OUR GODDESS?" SHE NAMES HERSELF IN PLURAL!
SILENCE, UNWORTHY ONE! SHE IS OUR QUEEN!

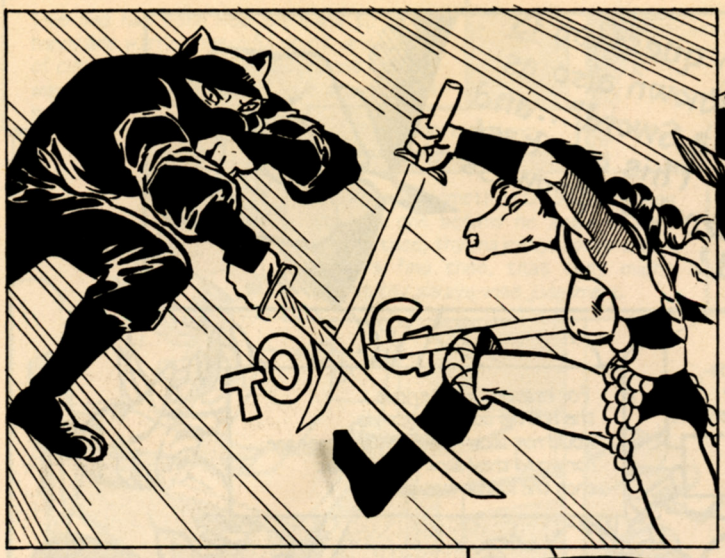
TO STEINHAFEN, THEN! I WILL SEE IT DONE!

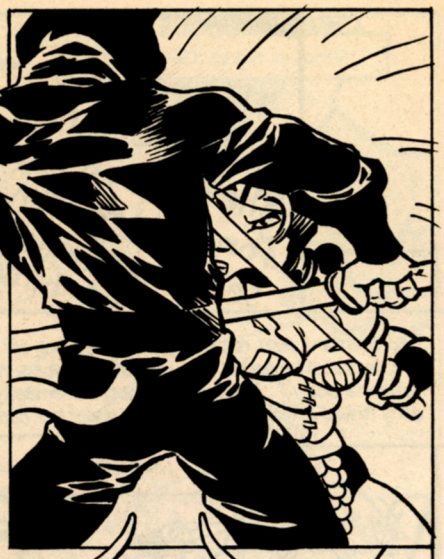
BUT NOW... 'TIS TIME FOR MY DAILY MEDITATIONS.
I AM NOT TO BE DISTURBED.


CLICK


I HAVE HEARD THAT QUEEN BEATRICE CONSORTS WITH DEMONS WHILE IN "MEDITATION"!
SLANDEROUS WOLVES! 'TIS THE IDLE GOSSIP OF RUSTIC WAGS, AND I WILL NOT HEAR IT!
SOME HAVE SAID THAT HER GODDESS HERSELF SPOKE WITH BEATRICE... TELLING HER TO SECRETLY KILL HER SISTER --THE FORMER QUEEN-- AND SEIZE HER HOLDINGS!
"OUR LADY BEATRICE HAS RENEWED OUR FIGHTING SPIRIT... INSPIRING THE PEOPLE WITH HER LEADERSHIP AND BATTLE PROWESS!"
"THAT DISTANT CONVENT, TO WHICH SHE WAS SENT AS A CHILD, HAS TAUGHT HER A GREAT MANY THINGS...BUT SURELY NOT "CONSORTING WITH DEMONS!"
...AND IF OUR VICTORIOUS STRATEGIES COME FROM THE MOUTH OF HER GODDESS HERSELF... I WILL NOT COMPLAIN OF THE SOURCE!"

KTANK
HOOOOK

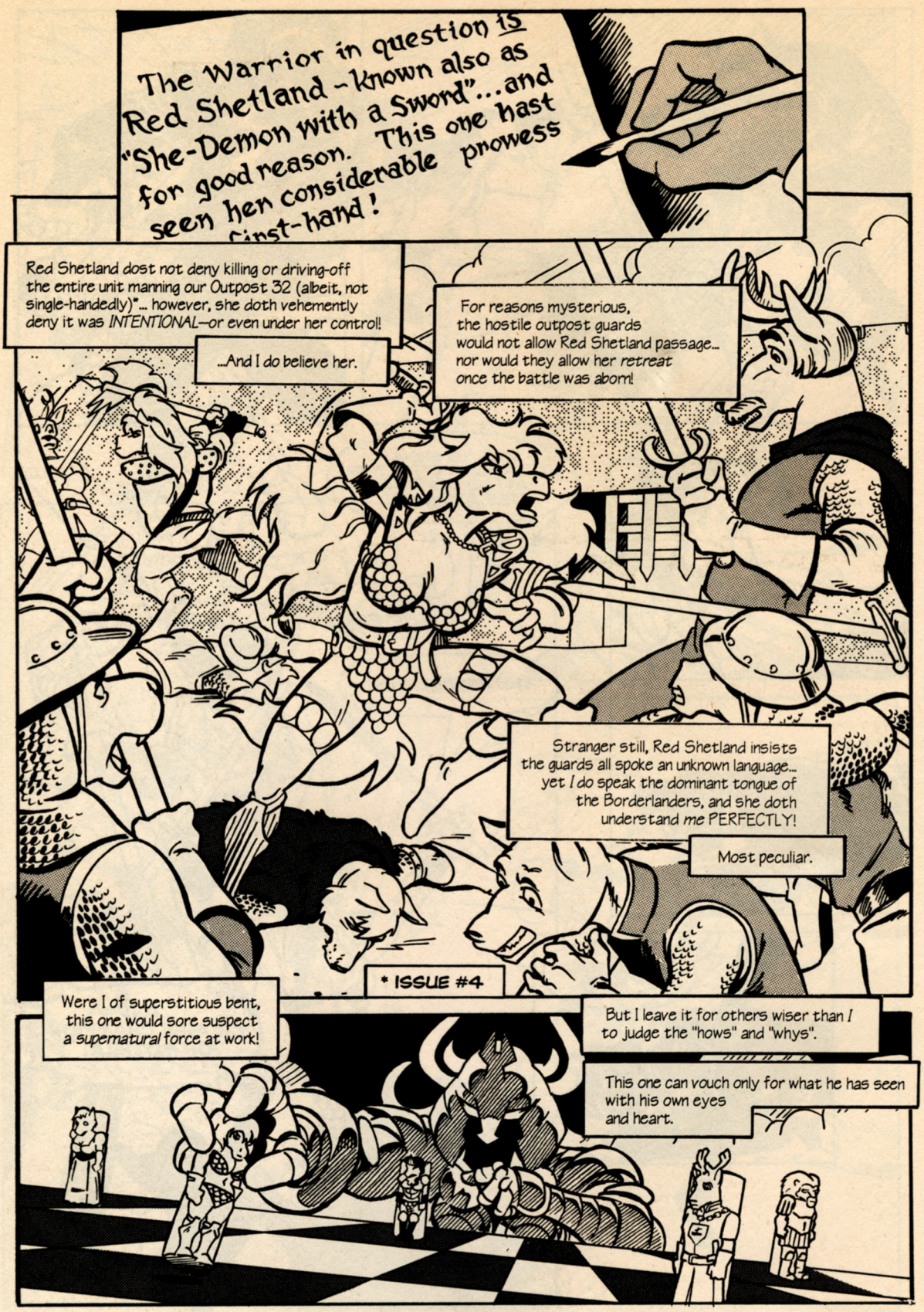


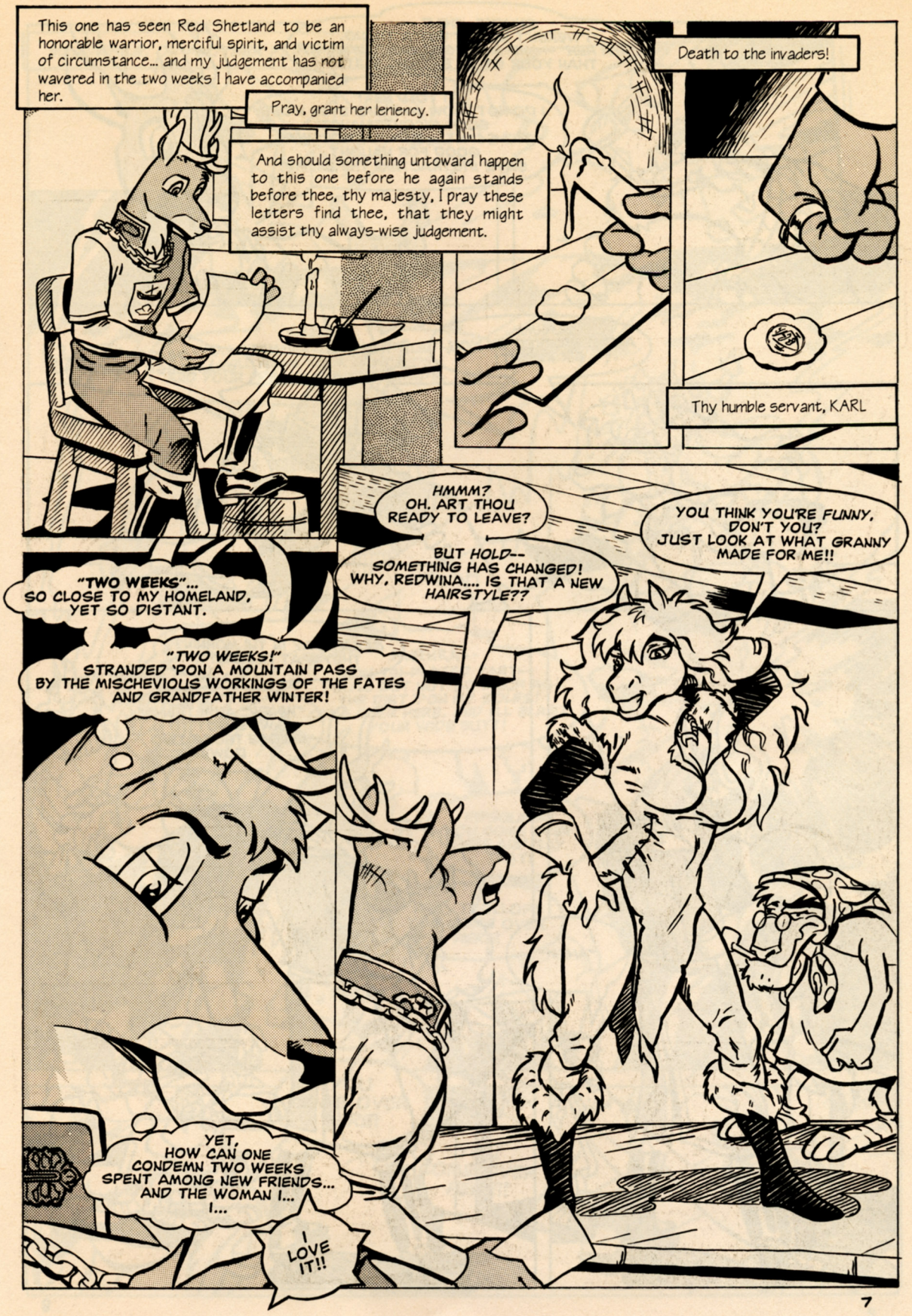



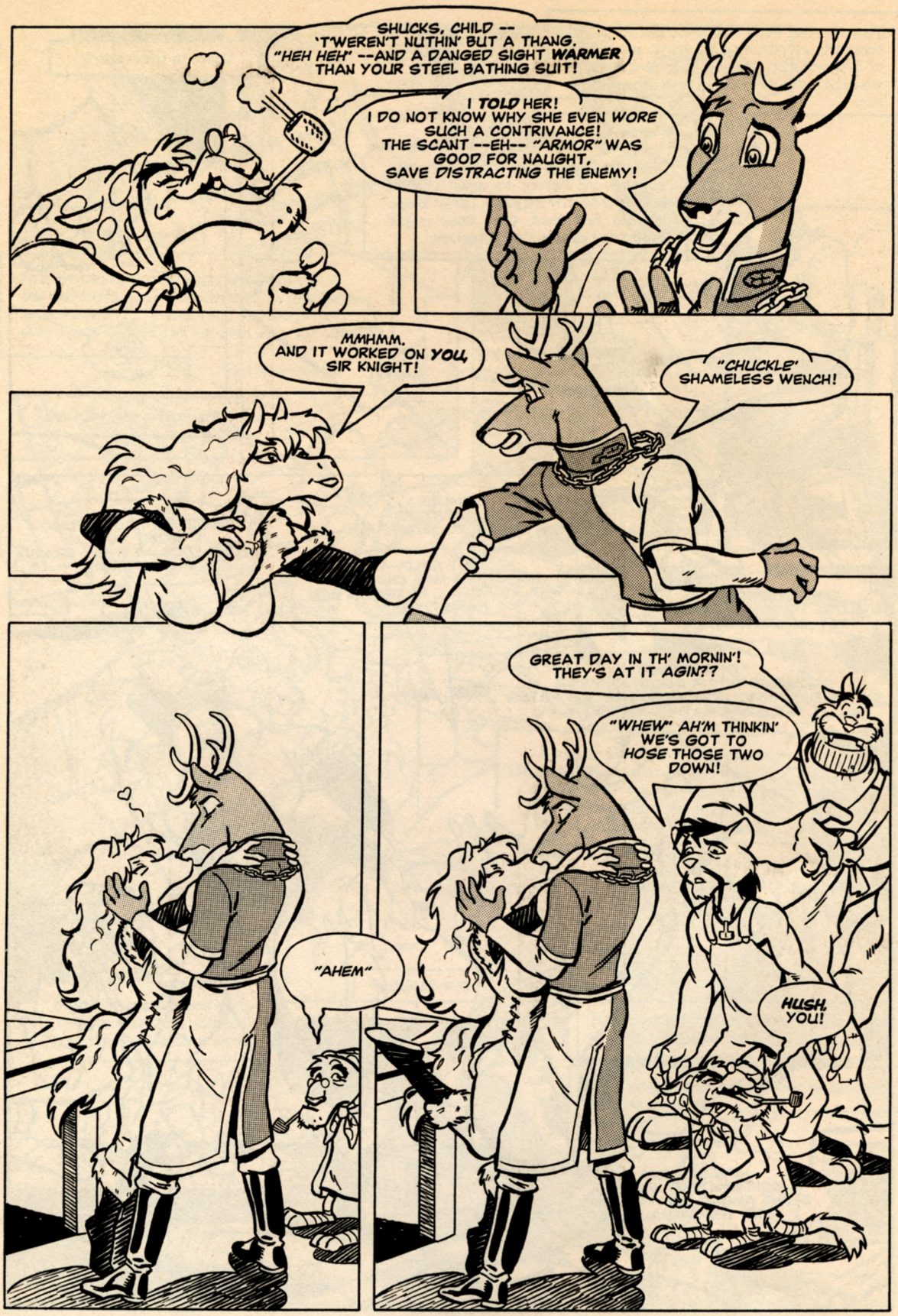
STILL, HE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN ATTACK BEATRICE: **"THE AVENGER"**,

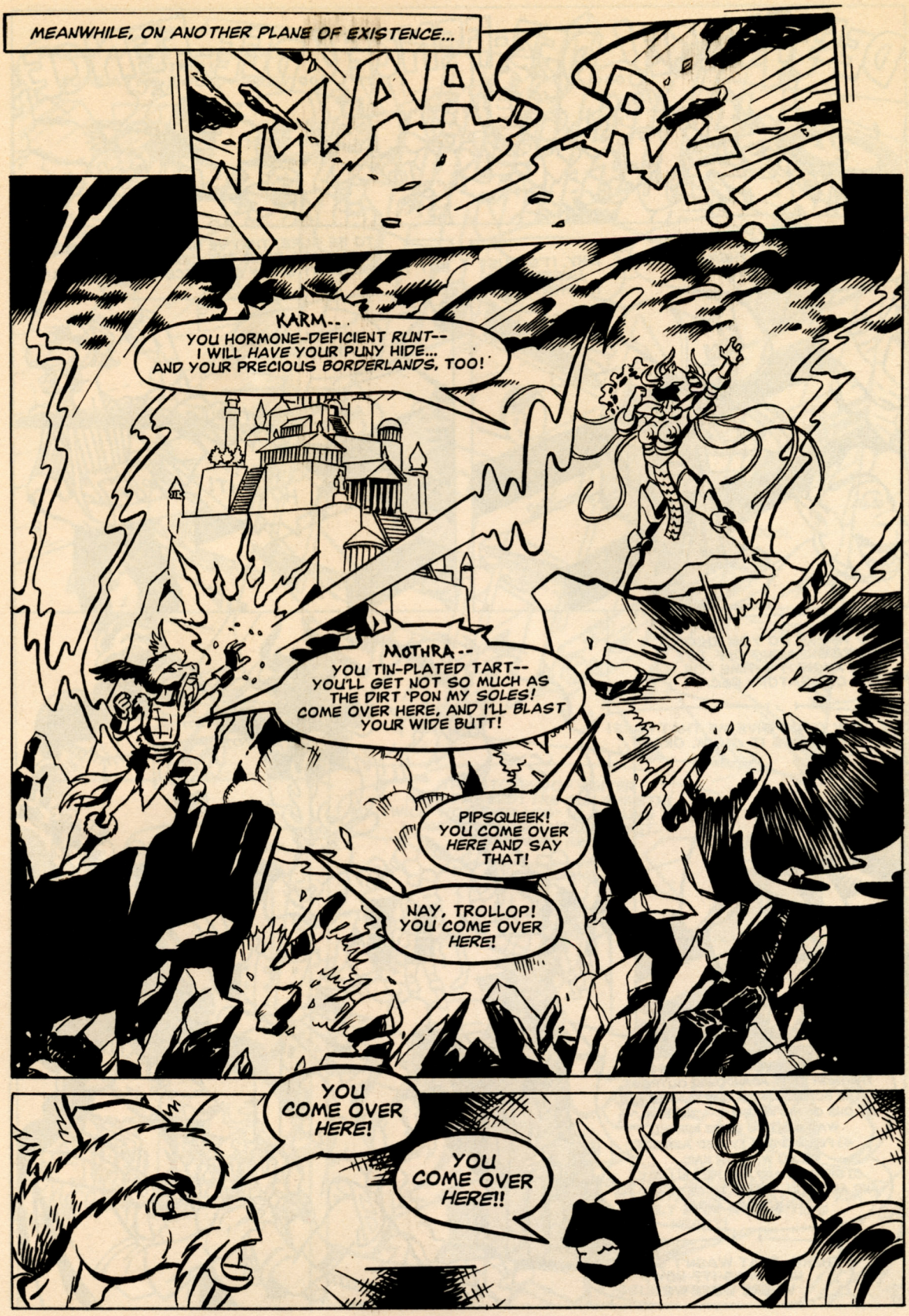
**"THE DEERSLAYER"**

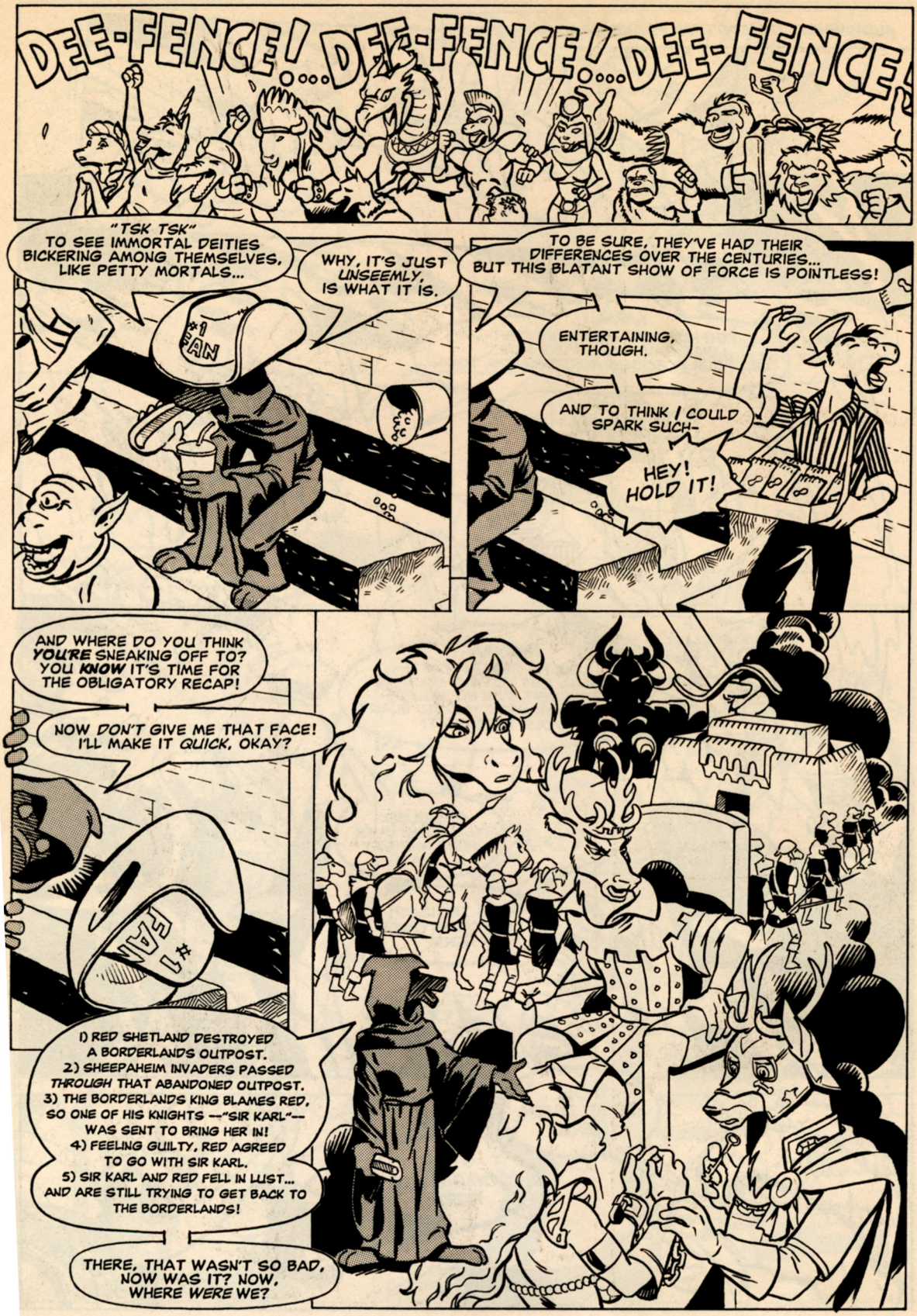
...AND CHOSEN CHAMPION OF **MOTHRA!**

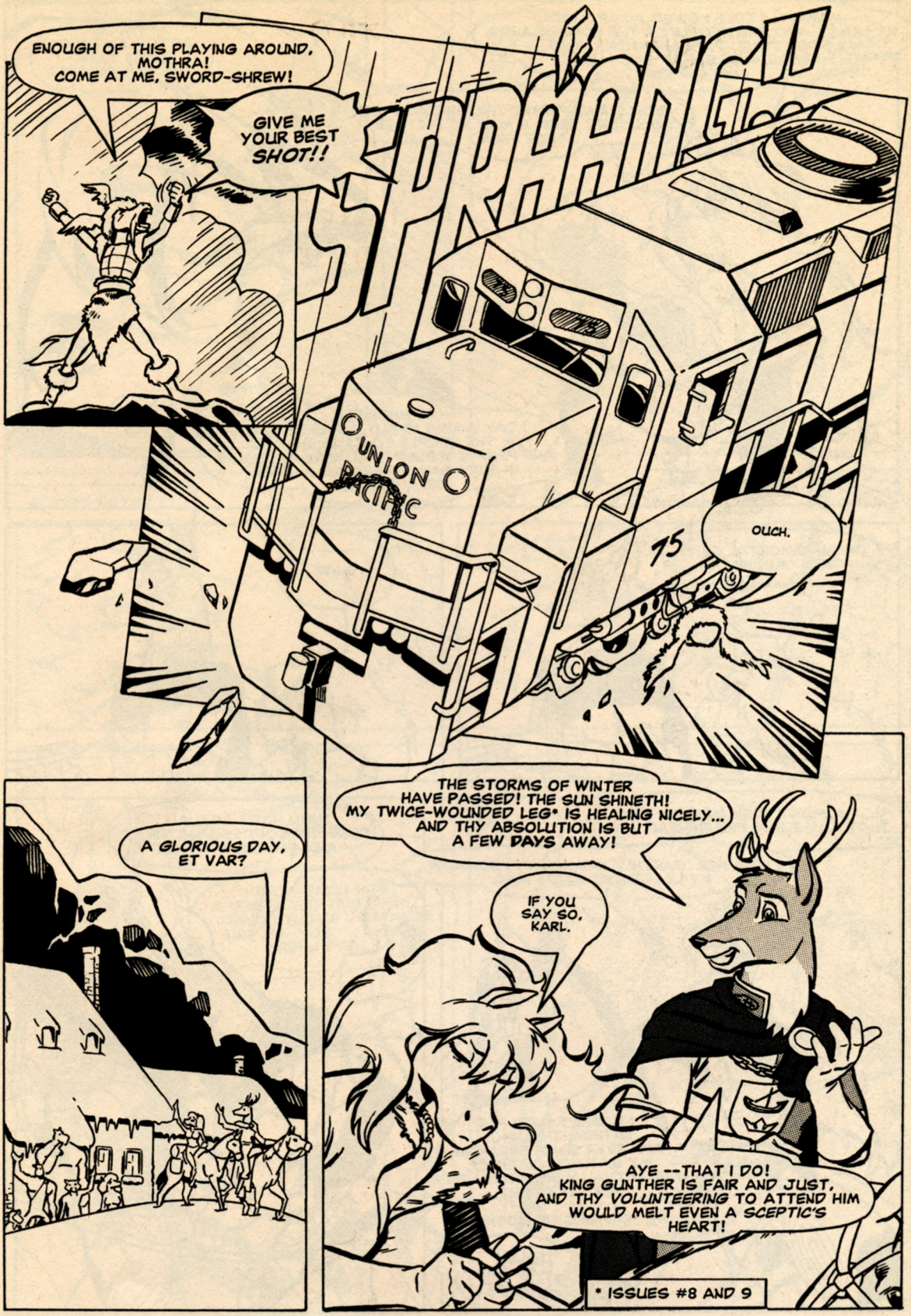

The Warrior in question IS Red Shetland - known also as "She-Demon with a Sword"... and for good reason. This one hast seen her considerable prowess first-hand!
Red Shetland dost not deny killing or driving-off the entire unit manning our Outpost 32 (albeit, not single-handedly)*... however, she doth vehemently deny it was INTENTIONAL—or even under her control!
...And I do believe her.
For reasons mysterious, the hostile outpost guards would not allow Red Shetland passage... nor would they allow her retreat once the battle was abom!
Stranger still, Red Shetland insists the guards all spoke an unknown language... yet I do speak the dominant tongue of the Borderlanders, and she doth understand me PERFECTLY!
Most peculiar.
* ISSUE #4
Were I of superstitious bent, this one would sore suspect a supernatural force at work!
But I leave it for others wiser than I to judge the "hows" and "whys".
This one can vouch only for what he has seen with his own eyes and heart.

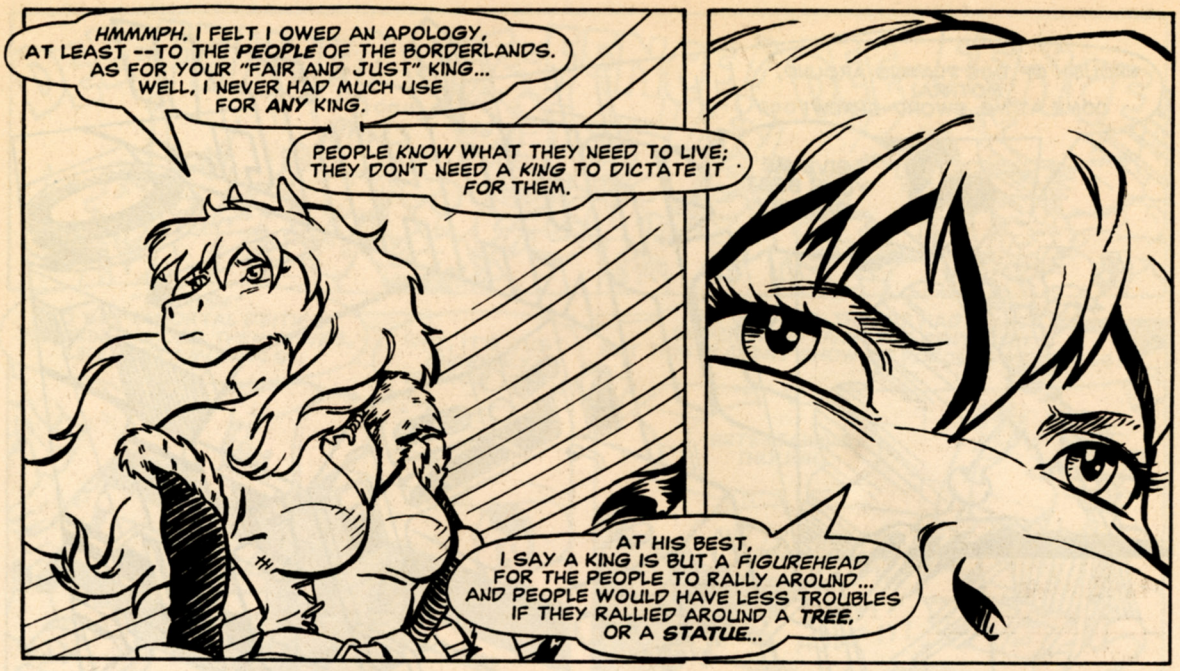

This one has seen Red Shetland to be an honorable warrior, merciful spirit, and victim of circumstance... and my judgement has not wavered in the two weeks I have accompanied her.
Pray, grant her leniency.
And should something untoward happen to this one before he again stands before thee, thy majesty, I pray these letters find thee, that they might assist thy always-wise judgement.
Death to the invaders!
Thy humble servant, KARL
"TWO WEEKS"... SO CLOSE TO MY HOMELAND, YET SO DISTANT.
"TWO WEEKS!" STRANDED 'PON A MOUNTAIN PASS BY THE MISCHEVIOUS WORKINGS OF THE FATES AND GRANDFATHER WINTER!
YET, HOW CAN ONE CONDEMN TWO WEEKS SPENT AMONG NEW FRIENDS... AND THE WOMAN I... I...
HMMM? OH. ART THOU READY TO LEAVE?
BUT HOLD-- SOMETHING HAS CHANGED! WHY, REDWINA.... IS THAT A NEW HAIRSTYLE??
YOU THINK YOU'RE FUNNY, DON'T YOU? JUST LOOK AT WHAT GRANNY MADE FOR ME!!
I LOVE IT!!

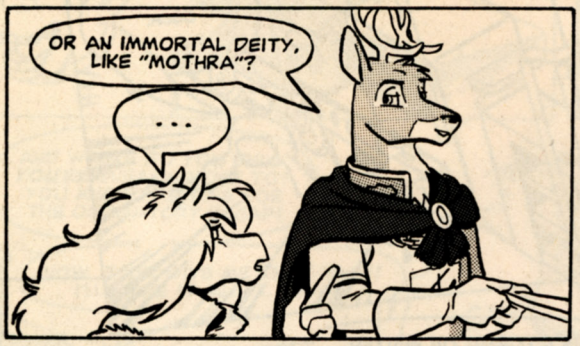

SHUCKS, CHILD -- 'T'WEREN'T NUTHIN' BUT A THANG. "HEH HEH" --AND A DANGED SIGHT WARMER THAN YOUR STEEL BATHING SUIT!
I TOLD HER! I DO NOT KNOW WHY SHE EVEN WORE SUCH A CONTRIVANCE! THE SCANT --EH-- "ARMOR" WAS GOOD FOR NAUGHT, SAVE DISTRACTING THE ENEMY!
MMHMM. AND IT WORKED ON YOU, SIR KNIGHT!
"CHUCKLE" SHAMELESS WENCH!
"AHEM"
GREAT DAY IN TH' MORNIN'! THEY'S AT IT AGIN??
"WHEW" AH'M THINKIN' WE'S GOT TO HOSE THOSE TWO DOWN!
HUSH, YOU!

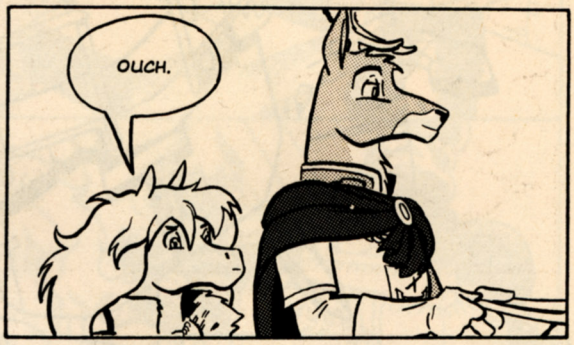

MEANWHILE, ON ANOTHER PLANE OF EXISTENCE...
MAAARK!!!
KARM-- YOU HORMONE-DEFICIENT RUNT-- I WILL HAVE YOUR PUNY HIDE... AND YOUR PRECIOUS BORDERLANDS, TOO!
MOTHRA-- YOU TIN-PLATED TART-- YOU'LL GET NOT SO MUCH AS THE DIRT 'PON MY SOLES! COME OVER HERE, AND I'LL BLAST YOUR WIDE BUTT!
PIPSQUEEK! YOU COME OVER HERE AND SAY THAT!
NAY, TROLLOP! YOU COME OVER HERE!
YOU COME OVER HERE!
YOU COME OVER HERE!!


DEE-FENCE! DEE-FENCE! DEE-FENCE!
"TSK TSK" TO SEE IMMORTAL DEITIES BICKERING AMONG THEMSELVES, LIKE PETTY MORTALS...
WHY, IT'S JUST UNSEEMLY, IS WHAT IT IS.
TO BE SURE, THEY'VE HAD THEIR DIFFERENCES OVER THE CENTURIES... BUT THIS BLATANT SHOW OF FORCE IS POINTLESS!
ENTERTAINING, THOUGH.
AND TO THINK I COULD SPARK SUCH-
HEY! HOLD IT!
AND WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE SNEAKING OFF TO? YOU KNOW IT'S TIME FOR THE OBLIGATORY RECAP!
NOW DON'T GIVE ME THAT FACE! I'LL MAKE IT QUICK, OKAY?
1) RED SHETLAND DESTROYED A BORDERLANDS OUTPOST.
2) SHEEPAHEIM INVADERS PASSED THROUGH THAT ABANDONED OUTPOST.
3) THE BORDERLANDS KING BLAMES RED, SO ONE OF HIS KNIGHTS --"SIR KARL"-- WAS SENT TO BRING HER IN!
4) FEELING GUILTY, RED AGREED TO GO WITH SIR KARL.
5) SIR KARL AND RED FELL IN LUST... AND ARE STILL TRYING TO GET BACK TO THE BORDERLANDS!
THERE, THAT WASN'T SO BAD, NOW WAS IT? NOW, WHERE WERE WE?


ENOUGH OF THIS PLAYING AROUND, MOTHRA! COME AT ME, SWORD-SHREW!
GIVE ME YOUR BEST SHOT!!
SPRAANG!!
UNION PACIFIC
75
OUCH.
A GLORIOUS DAY, ET VAR?
THE STORMS OF WINTER HAVE PASSED! THE SUN SHINETH! MY TWICE-WOUNDED LEG* IS HEALING NICELY... AND THY ABSOLUTION IS BUT A FEW DAYS AWAY!
IF YOU SAY SO, KARL.
AYE --THAT I DO! KING GUNTHER IS FAIR AND JUST, AND THY VOLUNTEERING TO ATTEND HIM WOULD MELT EVEN A SCEPTIC'S HEART!
* ISSUES #8 AND 9


HMMMPH. I FELT I OWED AN APOLOGY, AT LEAST --TO THE PEOPLE OF THE BORDERLANDS. AS FOR YOUR "FAIR AND JUST" KING... WELL, I NEVER HAD MUCH USE FOR ANY KING.
PEOPLE KNOW WHAT THEY NEED TO LIVE; THEY DON'T NEED A KING TO DICTATE IT FOR THEM.
AT HIS BEST, I SAY A KING IS BUT A FIGUREHEAD FOR THE PEOPLE TO RALLY AROUND... AND PEOPLE WOULD HAVE LESS TROUBLES IF THEY RALLIED AROUND A TREE, OR A STATUE...


OR AN IMMORTAL DEITY, LIKE "MOTHRA"?
...

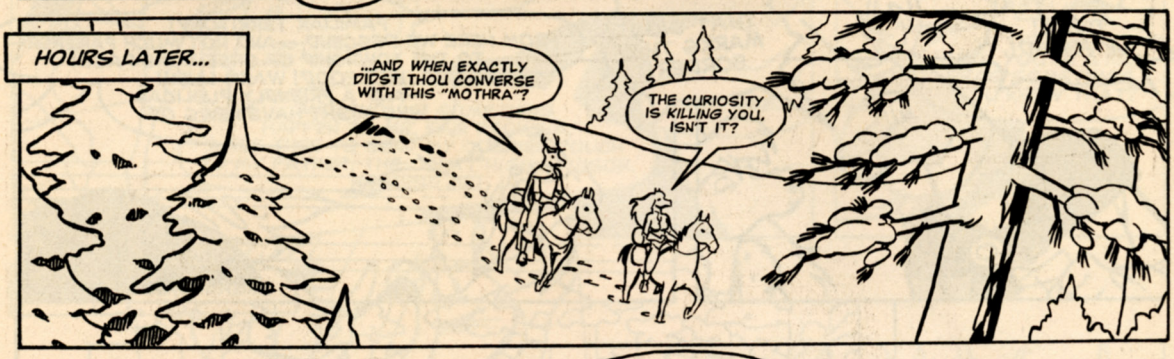

OUCH.

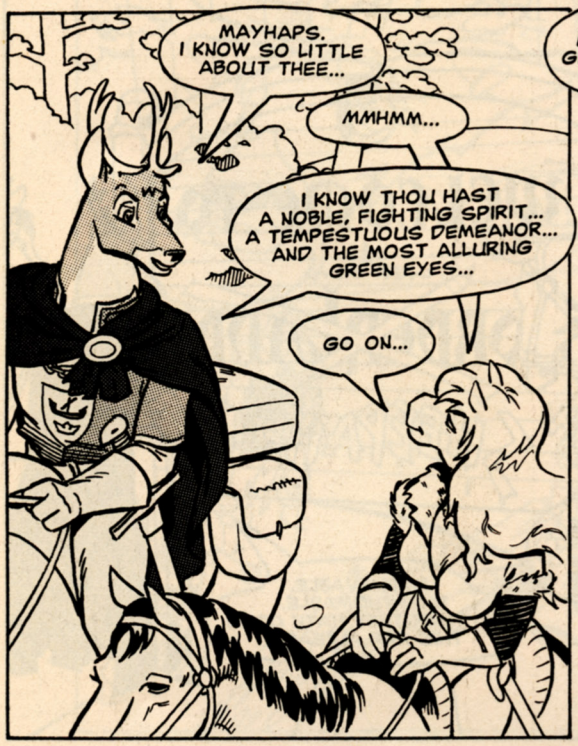
I... I ALMOST WISH MOTHRA WAS JUST A LIFELESS FIGUREHEAD NOW.
I WAS HER "EARTHLY CHAMPION", YOU KNOW... AT LEAST SHE SAID I WAS.
I HAVEN'T SEEN HER LATELY, THOUGH... AND EVER SINCE BREAKING MY OATH OF CELIBACY, I'VE ACTUALLY BEEN DREADING HER NEXT VISIT.
WE "SISTERS OF MOTHRA" -
HOLD! STOP THE PARADE!

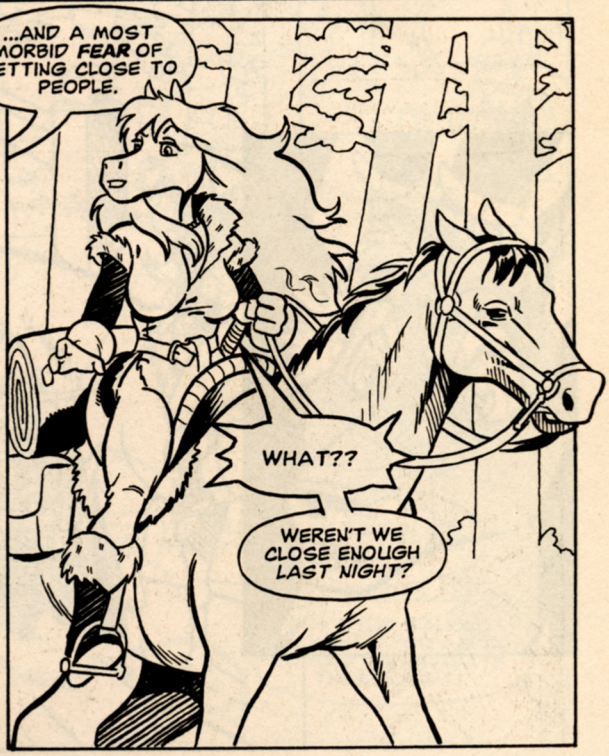
THOU HAST ACTUALLY SEEN THY GODDESS "MOTHRA"? --AND SPOKEN WITH HER??
WELL... YEAH, SURE...

"CHUCKLE" "SNORT" AND WHAT BOTTLE WERT THOU DRINKING OUT OF?
SHE'S REAL! SHE PERSONALLY DIRECTS HER WARRIORS BY APPEARING ON EARTH --SOMETIMES IN THE FORM OF A MOTH-- AND-

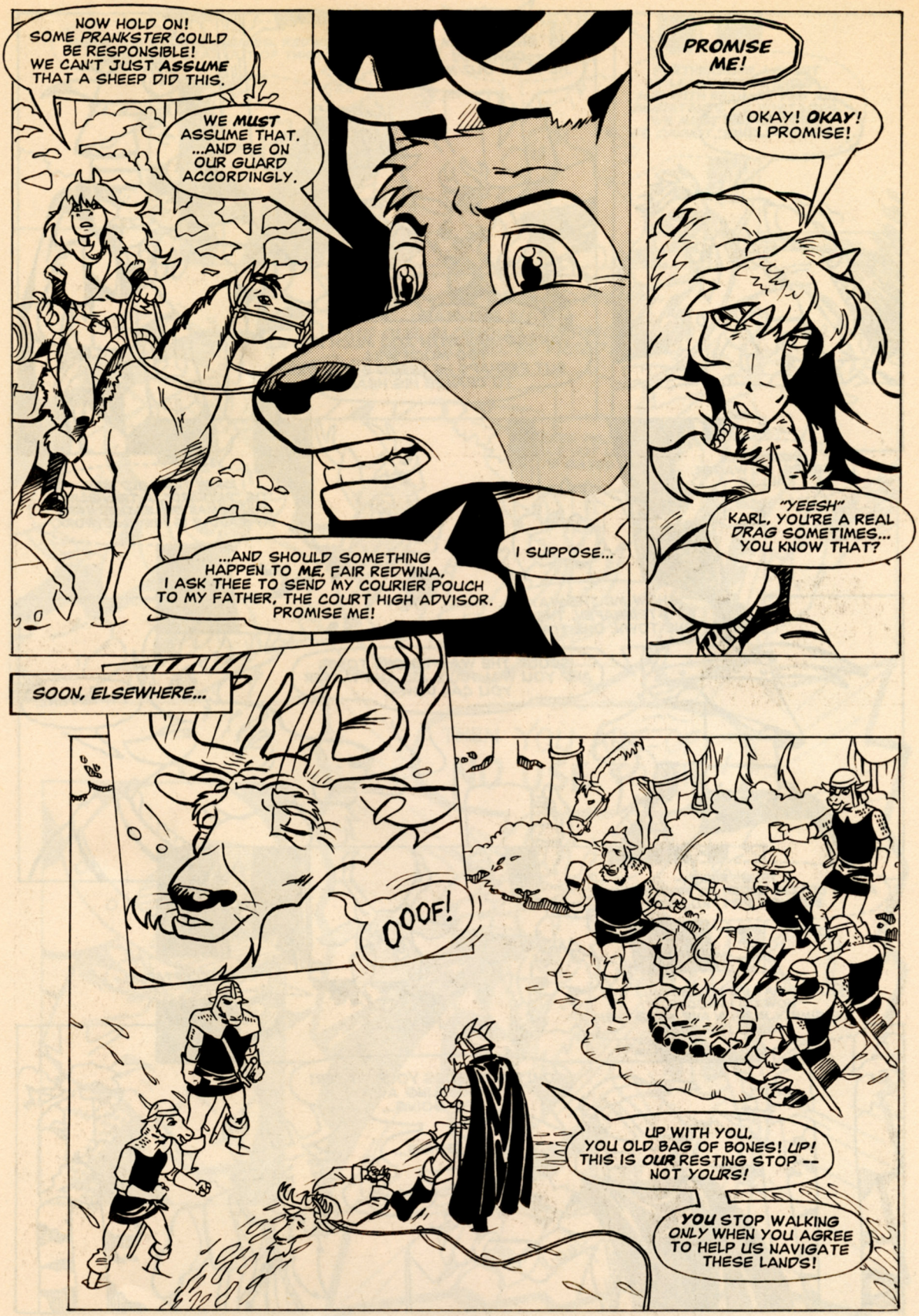
"GUFFAW!" SO THOU SPOKE TO A MOTH??
YOU'LL BE LUCKY IF I SPEAK TO YOU ANYMORE!
OKAY! "CHUCKLE" I RELENT!

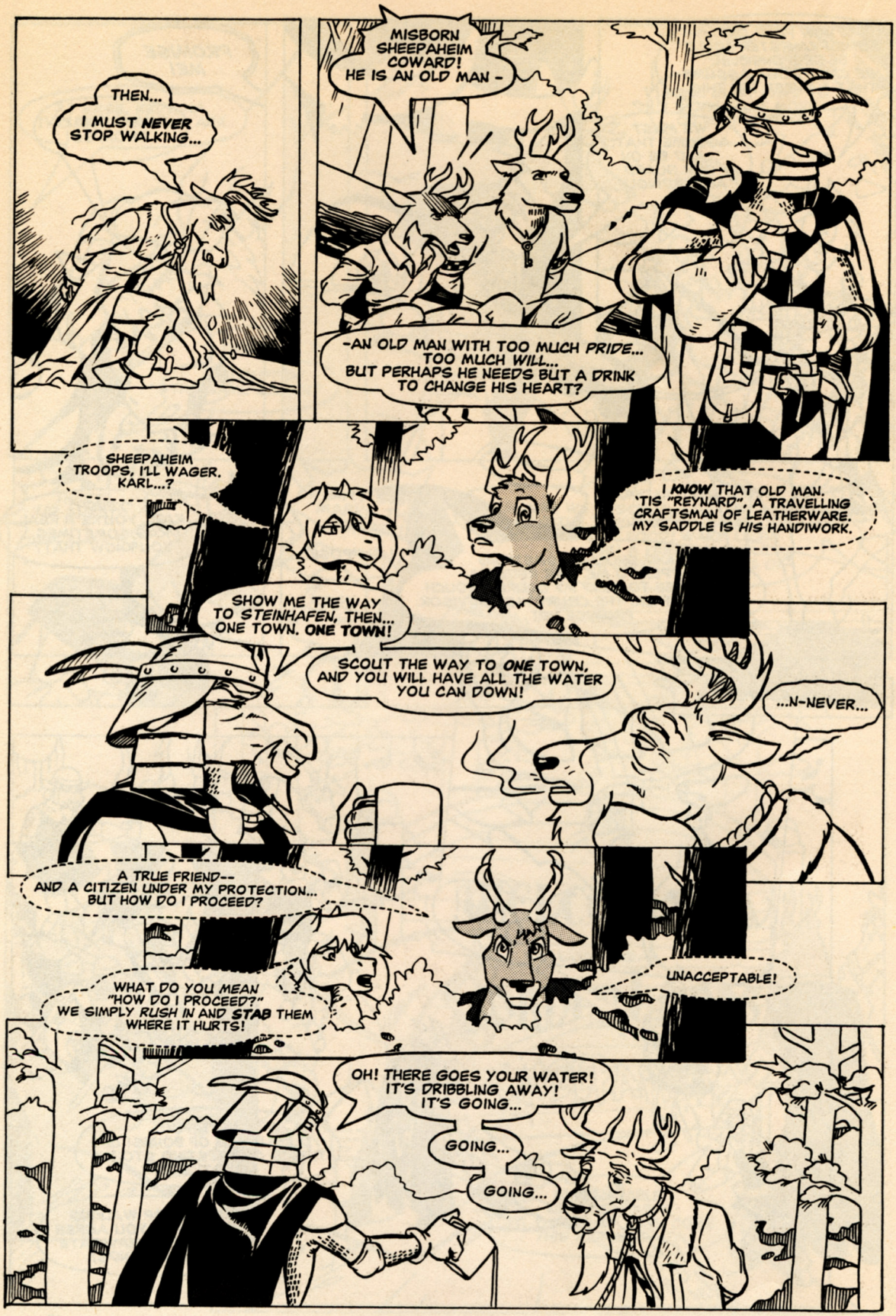

HOURS LATER...
...AND WHEN EXACTLY DIDST THOU CONVERSE WITH THIS "MOTHRA"?
THE CURIOSITY IS KILLING YOU, ISN'T IT?


MAYHAPS, I KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT THEE...
MMHMM...
I KNOW THOU HAST A NOBLE, FIGHTING SPIRIT... A TEMPESTUOUS DEMEANOR... AND THE MOST ALLURING GREEN EYES...
GO ON...


...AND A MOST MORBID FEAR OF GETTING CLOSE TO PEOPLE.
WHAT??
WEREN'T WE CLOSE ENOUGH LAST NIGHT?

AT EASE, REDWINA. TWO OF A KIND, WE ARE.
"SIGH"
I DO SUFFER THE SAME AILMENT.
THEN... WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WORK SOME MORE ON THAT REMEDY!
THERE! UP AHEAD!
THAT SIGN MARKS THE BORDER!
FAMILIAR TERRITORY! FROM HERE WE DESCEND --AND NOT MUCH FARTHER-- TO THE TOWNSHIP OF GREENLORE PASS! HOT FOOD! WARM LINEN! --AND A FRIENDLY PUBLICAN WHO MIGHT HAVE NEWS OF-
WELCOME TO
BORDERLANDS
NEW SHEEPAHEIM
THIS DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.
UNBELIEVABLE. UNFATHOMABLE. TO THINK THEY HATH COME THIS FAR ALREADY.

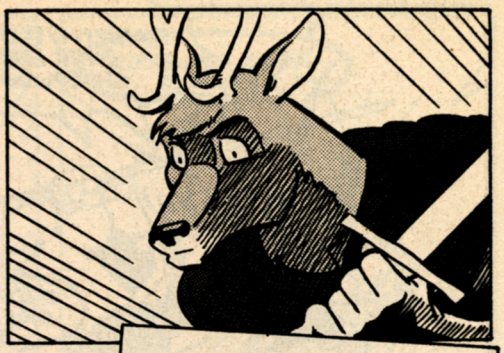

NOW HOLD ON! SOME PRANKSTER COULD BE RESPONSIBLE! WE CAN'T JUST ASSUME THAT A SHEEP DID THIS.
WE MUST ASSUME THAT. ...AND BE ON OUR GUARD ACCORDINGLY.
...AND SHOULD SOMETHING HAPPEN TO ME, FAIR REDWINA, I ASK THEE TO SEND MY COURIER POUCH TO MY FATHER, THE COURT HIGH ADVISOR. PROMISE ME!
I SUPPOSE...
PROMISE ME!
OKAY! OKAY! I PROMISE!
"YEESH" KARL, YOU'RE A REAL DRAG SOMETIMES... YOU KNOW THAT?
SOON, ELSEWHERE...
OOOF!
UP WITH YOU, YOU OLD BAG OF BONES! UP! THIS IS OUR RESTING STOP -- NOT YOURS!
YOU STOP WALKING ONLY WHEN YOU AGREE TO HELP US NAVIGATE THESE LANDS!

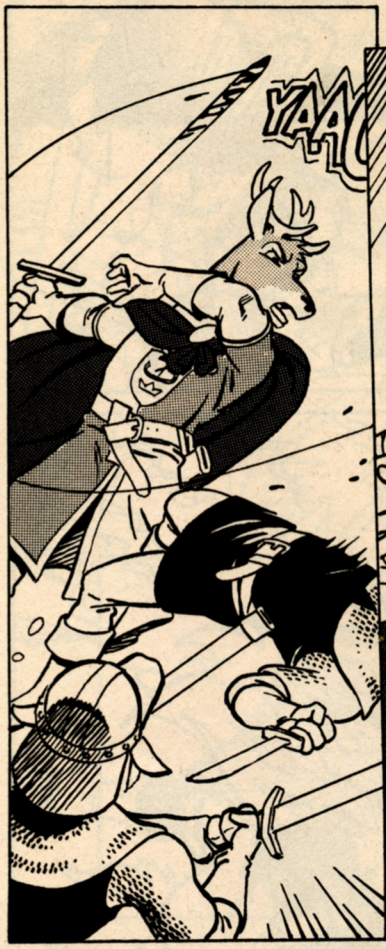

THEN...
I MUST NEVER STOP WALKING...
MISBORN SHEEPAHEIM COWARD! HE IS AN OLD MAN -
-AN OLD MAN WITH TOO MUCH PRIDE... TOO MUCH WILL... BUT PERHAPS HE NEEDS BUT A DRINK TO CHANGE HIS HEART?
SHEEPAHEIM TROOPS, I'LL WAGER. KARL...?
I KNOW THAT OLD MAN. 'TIS "REYNARD", A TRAVELLING CRAFTSMAN OF LEATHERWARE. MY SADDLE IS HIS HANDIWORK.
SHOW ME THE WAY TO STEINHAFEN, THEN... ONE TOWN. ONE TOWN!
SCOUT THE WAY TO ONE TOWN, AND YOU WILL HAVE ALL THE WATER YOU CAN DOWN!
...N-NEVER...
A TRUE FRIEND-- AND A CITIZEN UNDER MY PROTECTION... BUT HOW DO I PROCEED?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "HOW DO I PROCEED?" WE SIMPLY RUSH IN AND STAB THEM WHERE IT HURTS!
UNACCEPTABLE!
OH! THERE GOES YOUR WATER! IT'S DRIBBLING AWAY! IT'S GOING...
GOING...
GOING...

THESE ARE NOT THY ENEMIES, REDWINA. THOU MUST STAY OUT OF THIS!
OH, MUST I?
FURTHERMORE, I COUNT AT LEAST SEVEN SHEEP... AND WITH REYNARD AND HIS ASSISTANTS AS HOSTAGES, WE MUST USE CAUTION. WE CANNOT "SIMPLY RUSH IN!"
DAMN YOUR FOOLISH HIDE! LEAD THE WAY -- AID OUR GLORIOUS CAMPAIGN-- AND YOU WILL BE FREED!
BASE FELLOW... I WOULD NOT LEAD THEE TO THE GATES OF HEL...
THEN YOU ARE OF NO USE TO ME!
URK!

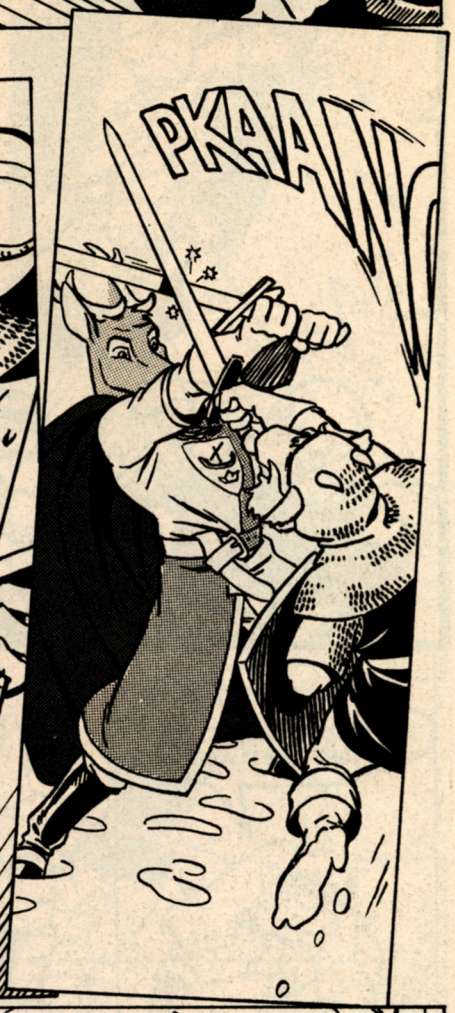
MOTHRA'S WRATH! I THOUGHT I'D SEEN COLD-BLOODED BEFORE, BUT -
KARL?
'GRRRRRR!'
SPLENDID! SO WE'RE USING THAT CAUTIOUS APPROACH, ARE WE?
WHA-? TO ARMS!
...AND KILL THE OTHER TWO.
AYE, SIR!
NOOO

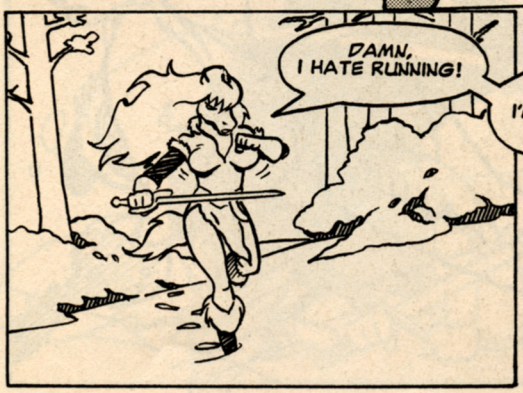
HEE HEE



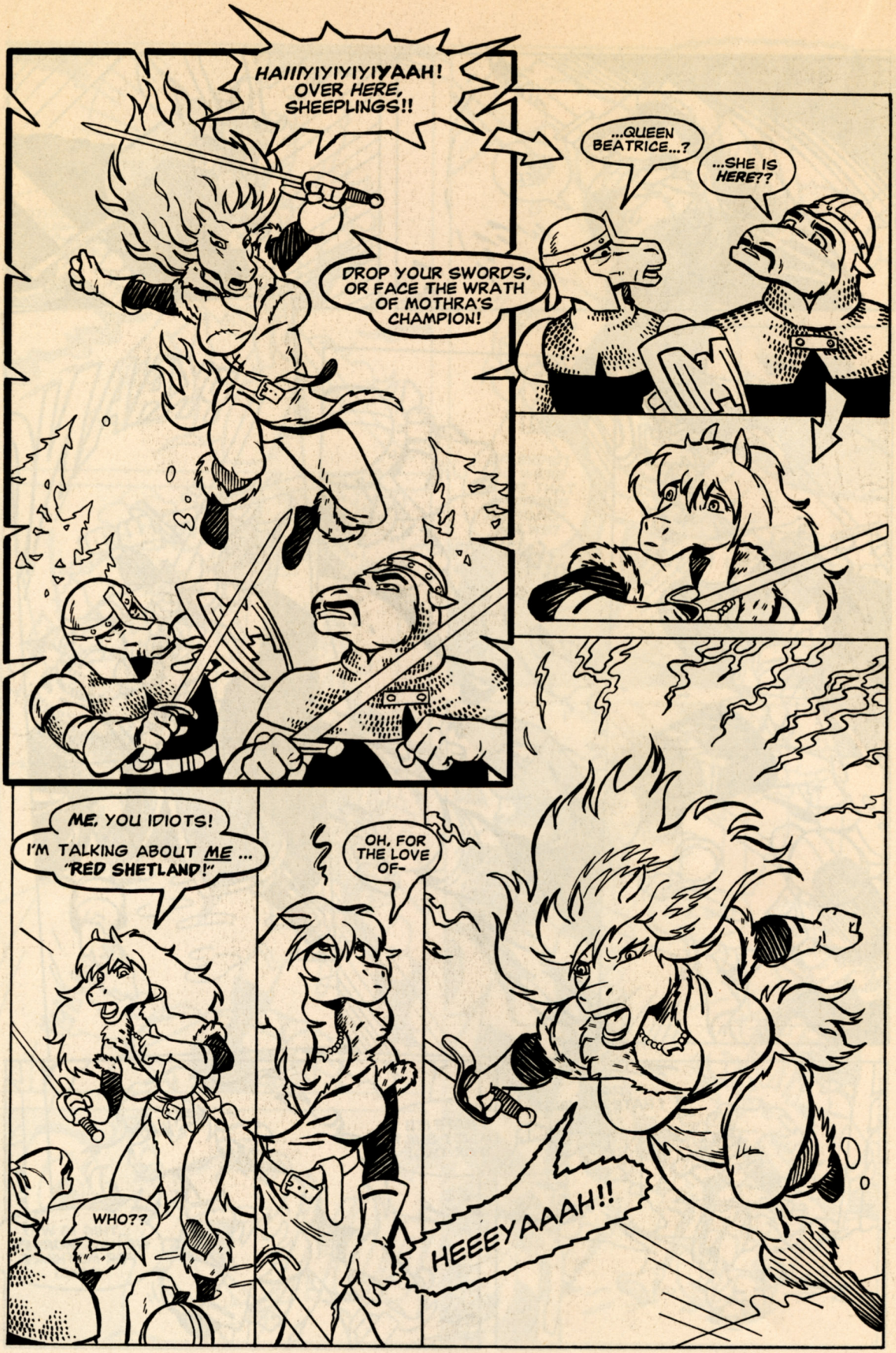

YAAC

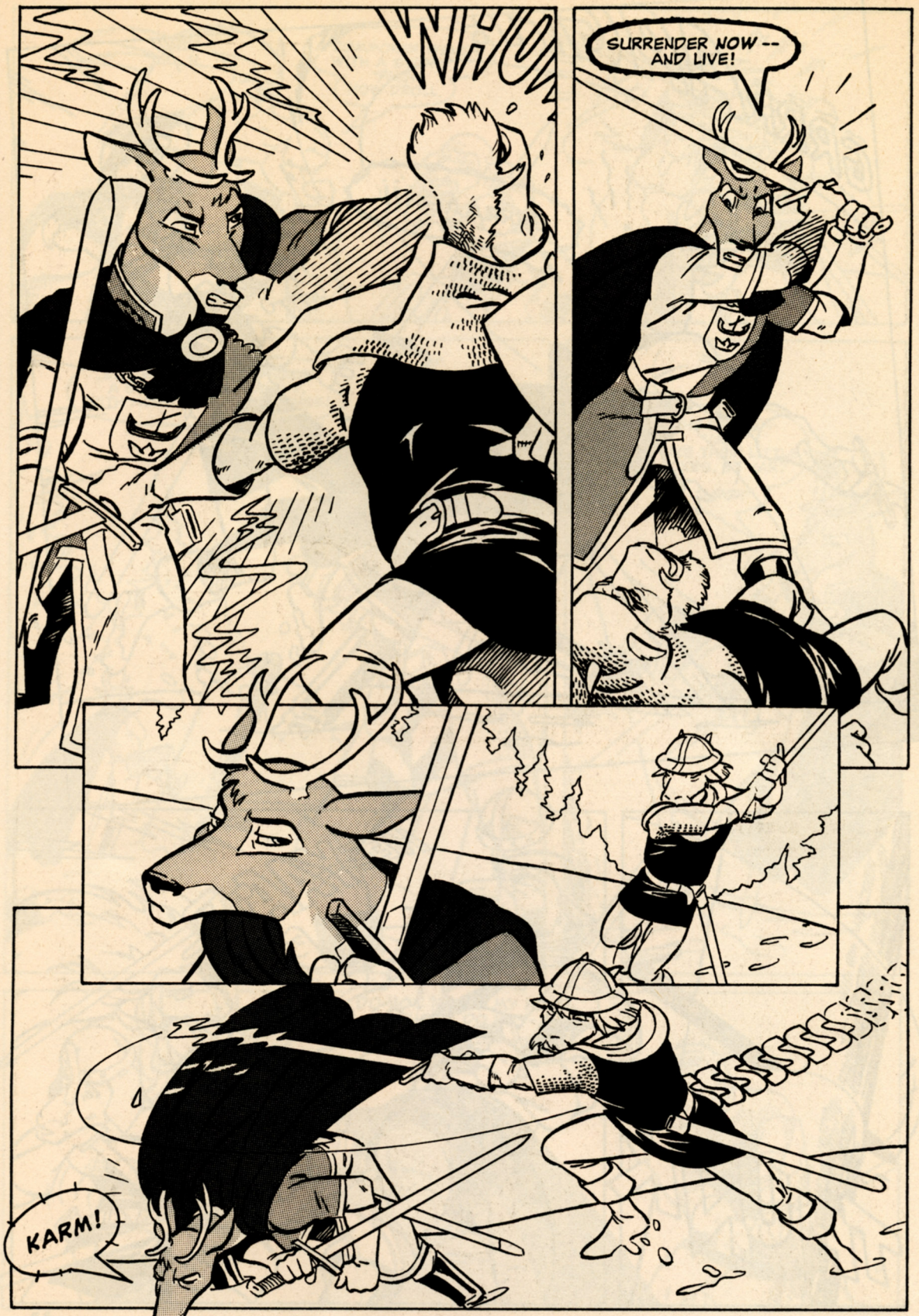
GREEAGH!

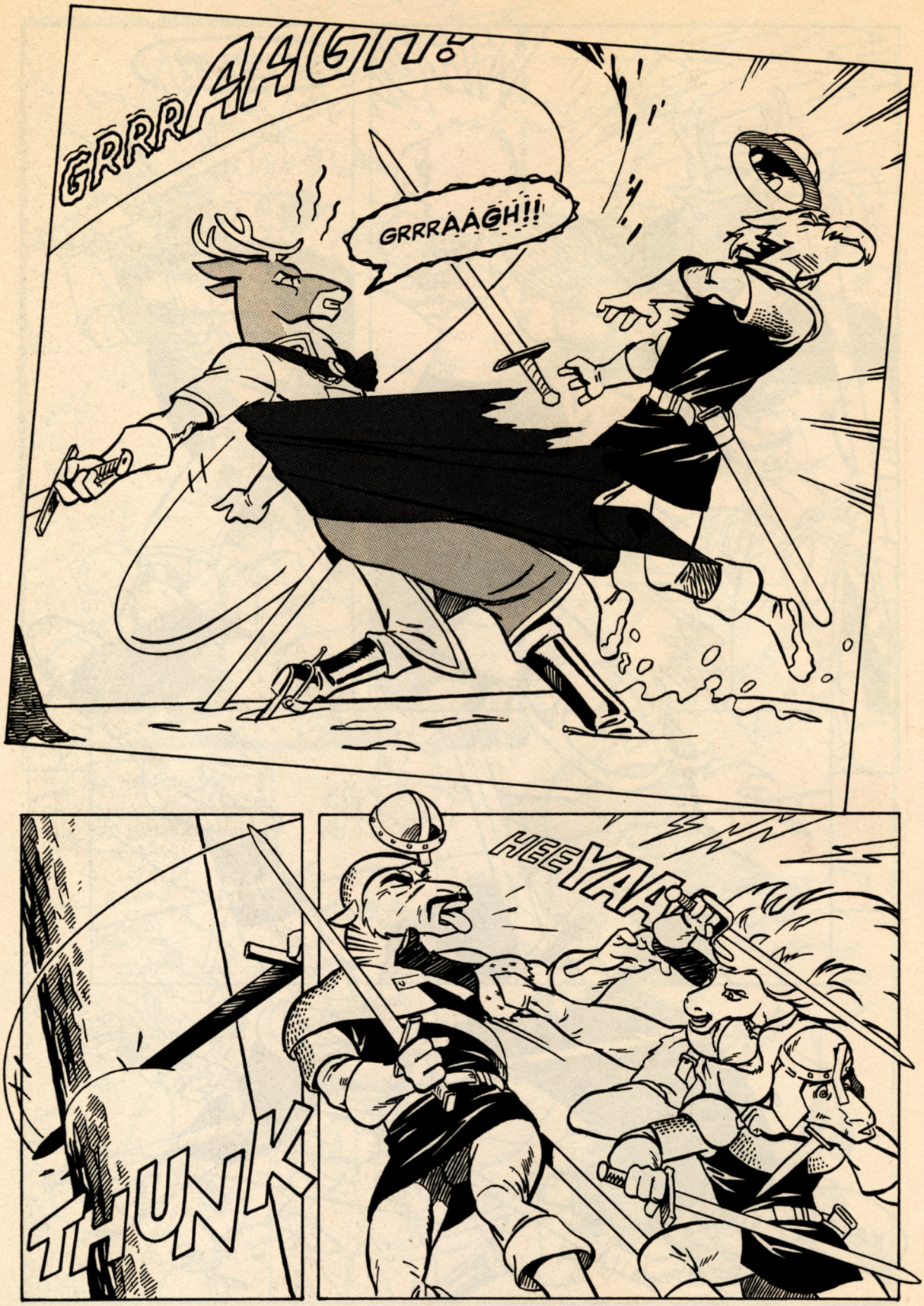

PKAAN


DAMN, I HATE RUNNING!

I HATE IT!! I'M NOT BUILT FOR THIS!
...THIS IS WHY WE HAVE HORSES, FOR MOTHRA'S SAKE!


HAIIIYIYIYIYIYAAH! OVER HERE, SHEEPLINGS!!
DROP YOUR SWORDS, OR FACE THE WRATH OF MOTHRA'S CHAMPION!
...QUEEN BEATRICE...?
...SHE IS HERE??
ME, YOU IDIOTS! I'M TALKING ABOUT ME ... "RED SHETLAND!"
WHO??
OH, FOR THE LOVE OF-
HEEEYAAAH!!


WHOM
SURRENDER NOW -- AND LIVE!
KARM!

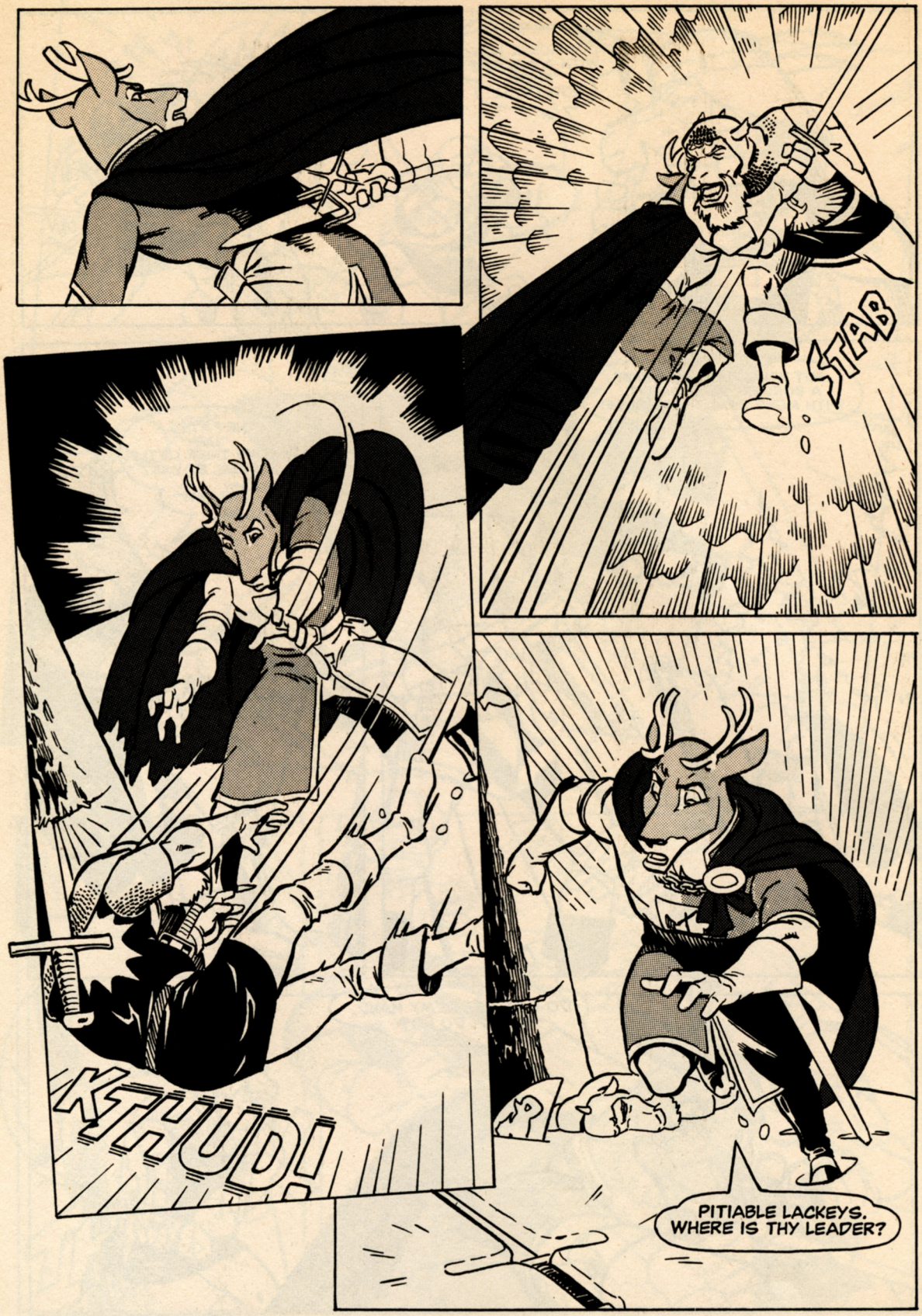

GRRRAAGH!
GRRRAAGH!!
THUNK
HEEYAA!

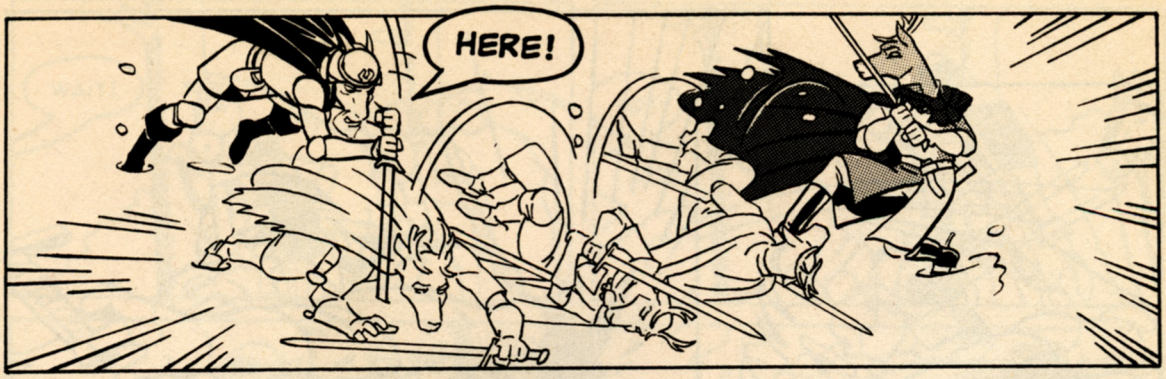
A COMMONER WENCH WITH A SWORD? "PHEH" HOW DROLL.

..BUT WHAT HAVE WE HERE? A BORDERLANDS KNIGHT, WITH MORE ZEAL THAN SENSE!

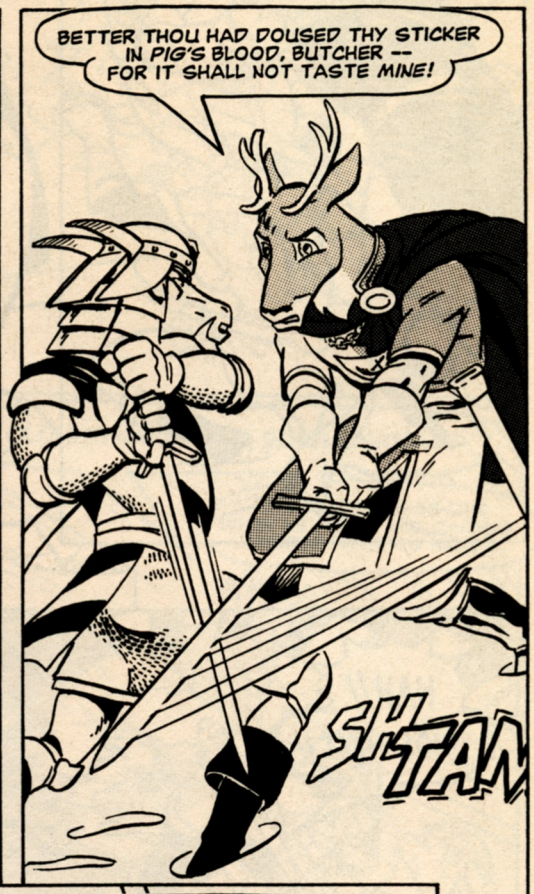
THE FATES - "UGH" - LIKE THEIR LITTLE JOKES, ET VAR?
"URGH"

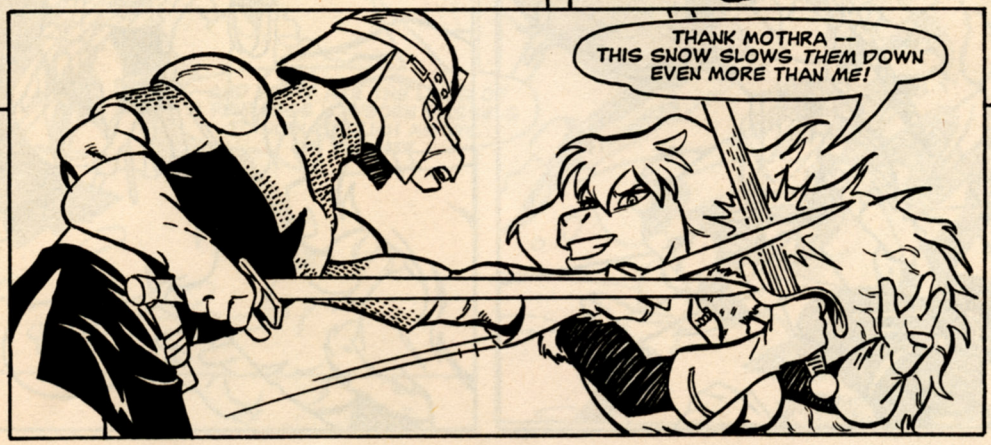
DO NOT FORCE MY HAND, SHEEP. DO NOT-


STAB
KTHUD!
PITIABLE LACKEYS. WHERE IS THY LEADER?

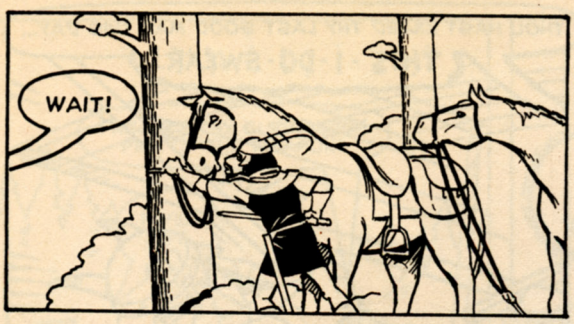

HERE!

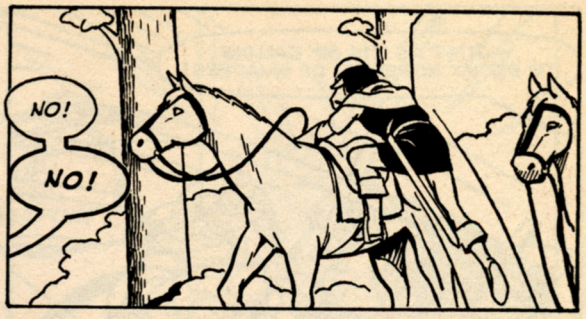
FINALLY -- A KNIGHT AND NOBLE! WORTHY BLOOD FOR MY THIRSTING BLADE!
KLONG

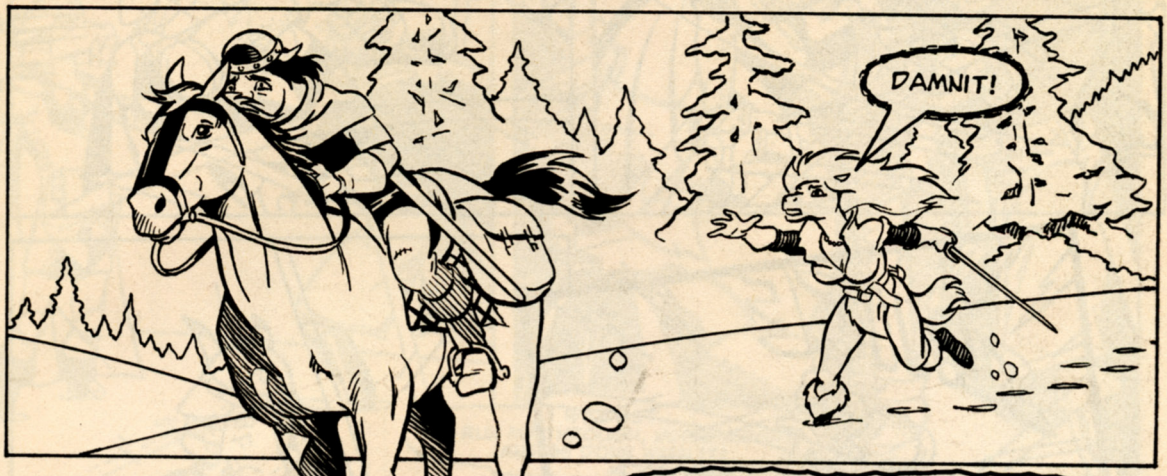

BETTER THOU HAD DOUSED THY STICKER IN PIG'S BLOOD, BUTCHER -- FOR IT SHALL NOT TASTE MINE!
SHTAN

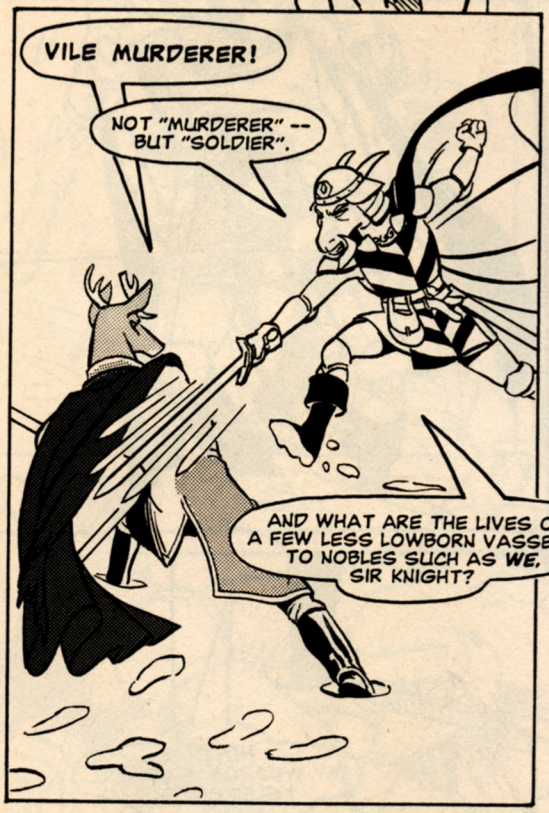

THANK MOTHRA -- THIS SNOW SLOWS THEM DOWN EVEN MORE THAN ME!

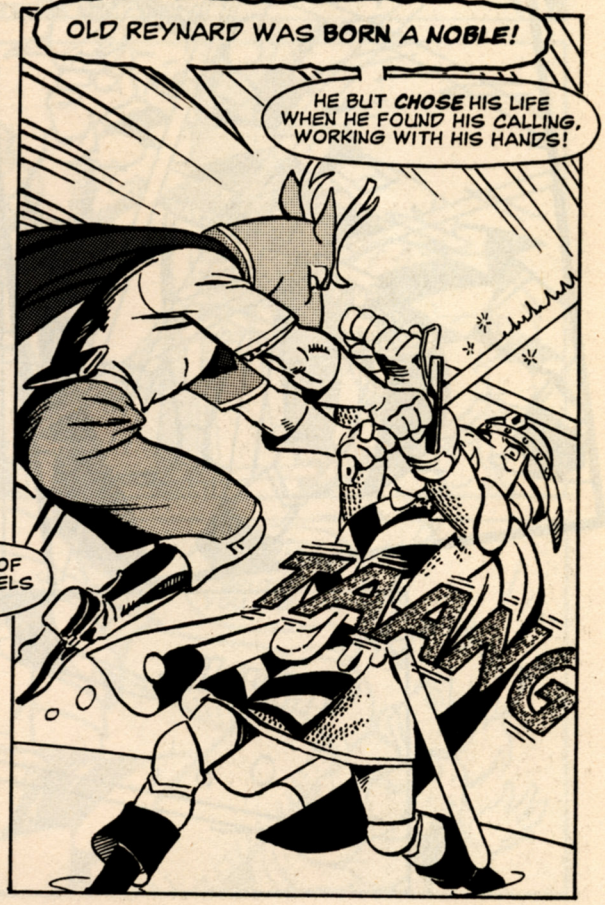
HAH!!
WHO'S NEXT?!
OH HO!..I SEE YOU!

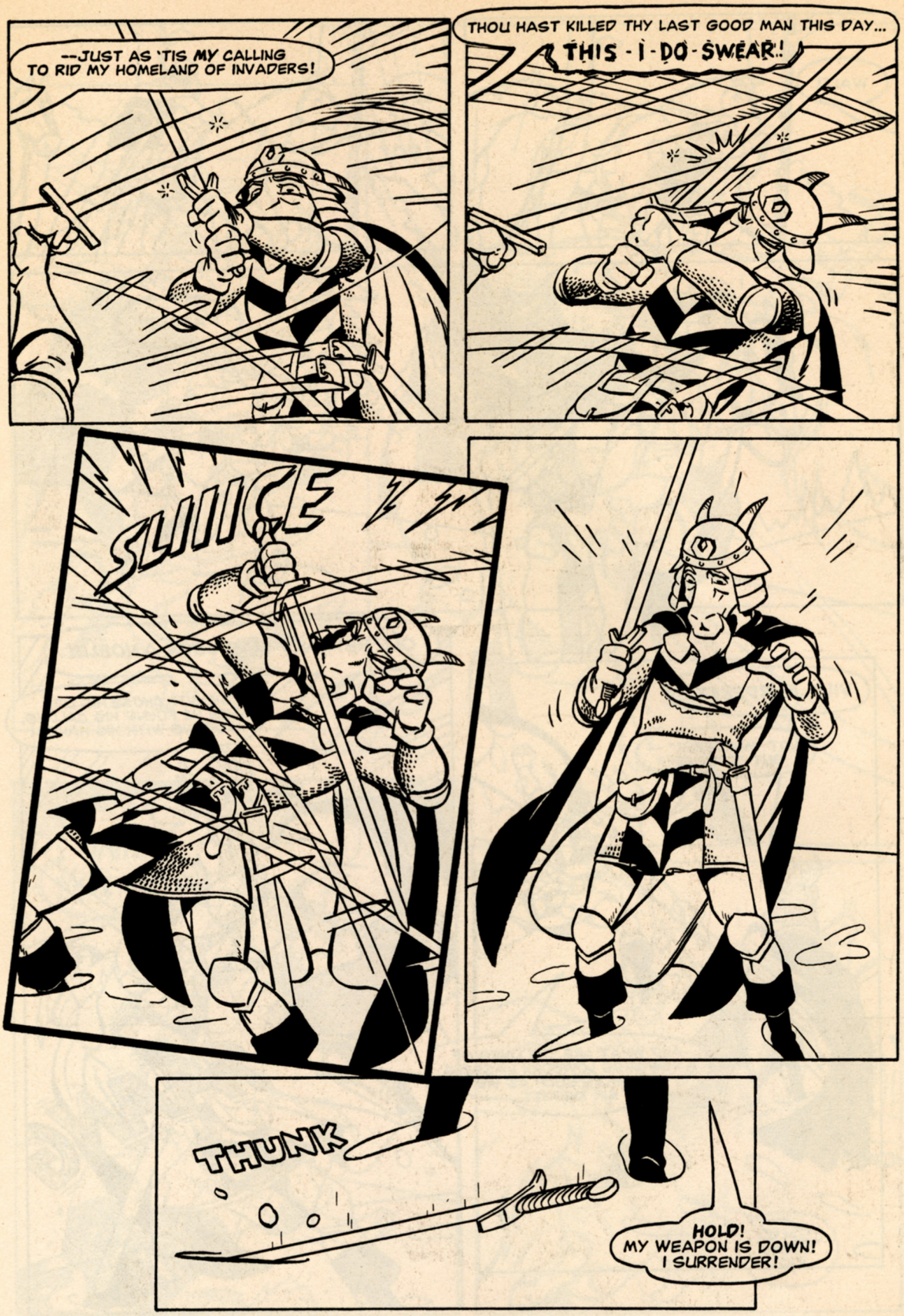

WAIT!


NO!
NO!


DAMNIT!

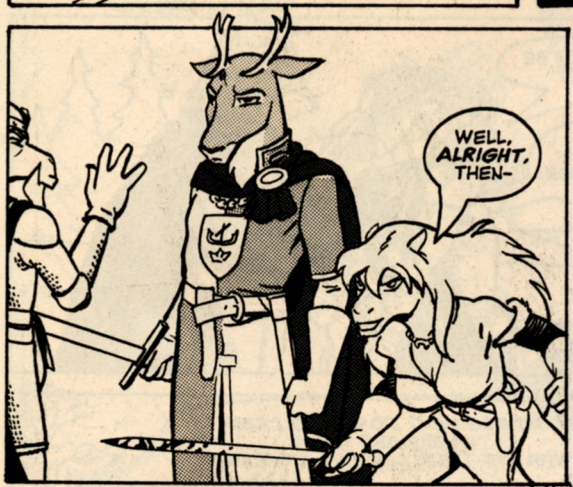

VILE MURDERER!
NOT "MURDERER" -- BUT "SOLDIER".
AND WHAT ARE THE LIVES OF A FEW LESS LOWBORN VASSELS TO NOBLES SUCH AS WE, SIR KNIGHT?

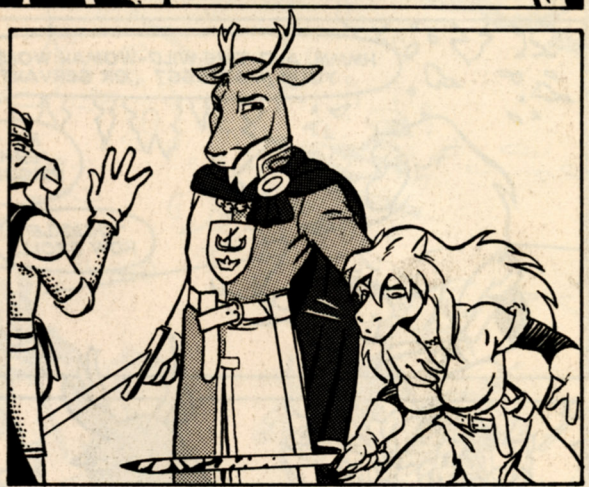

OLD REYNARD WAS BORN A NOBLE!
HE BUT CHOSE HIS LIFE WHEN HE FOUND HIS CALLING, WORKING WITH HIS HANDS!
BANG

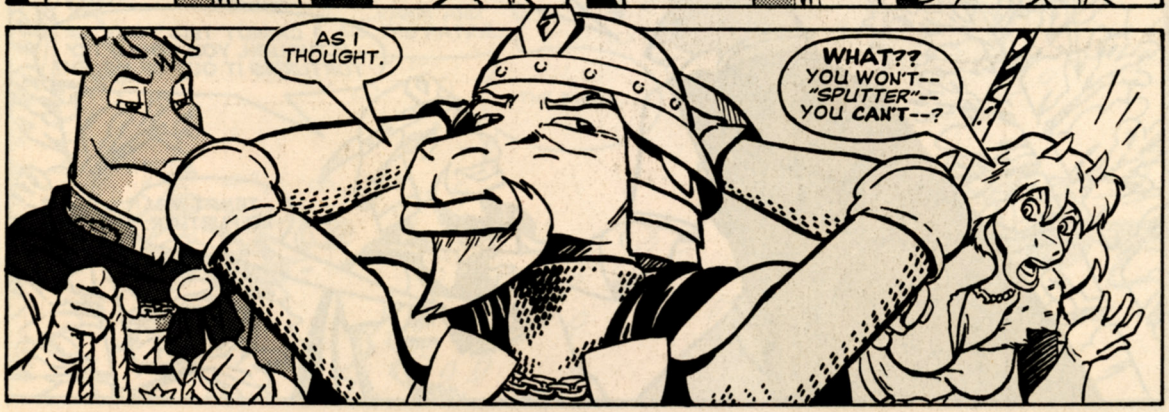

--JUST AS 'TIS MY CALLING TO RID MY HOMELAND OF INVADERS!
THOU HAST KILLED THY LAST GOOD MAN THIS DAY...
THIS - I - DO - SWEAR!
SLIIICE
THUNK
HOLD! MY WEAPON IS DOWN! I SURRENDER!

I REJECT THY SURRENDER! PICK UP THY WEAPON!
I WILL NOT.

PICK-UP-THY-WEAPON!
I WILL NOT... SO RUN ME THROUGH, NOBLE KNIGHT, AND BE DONE WITH IT!

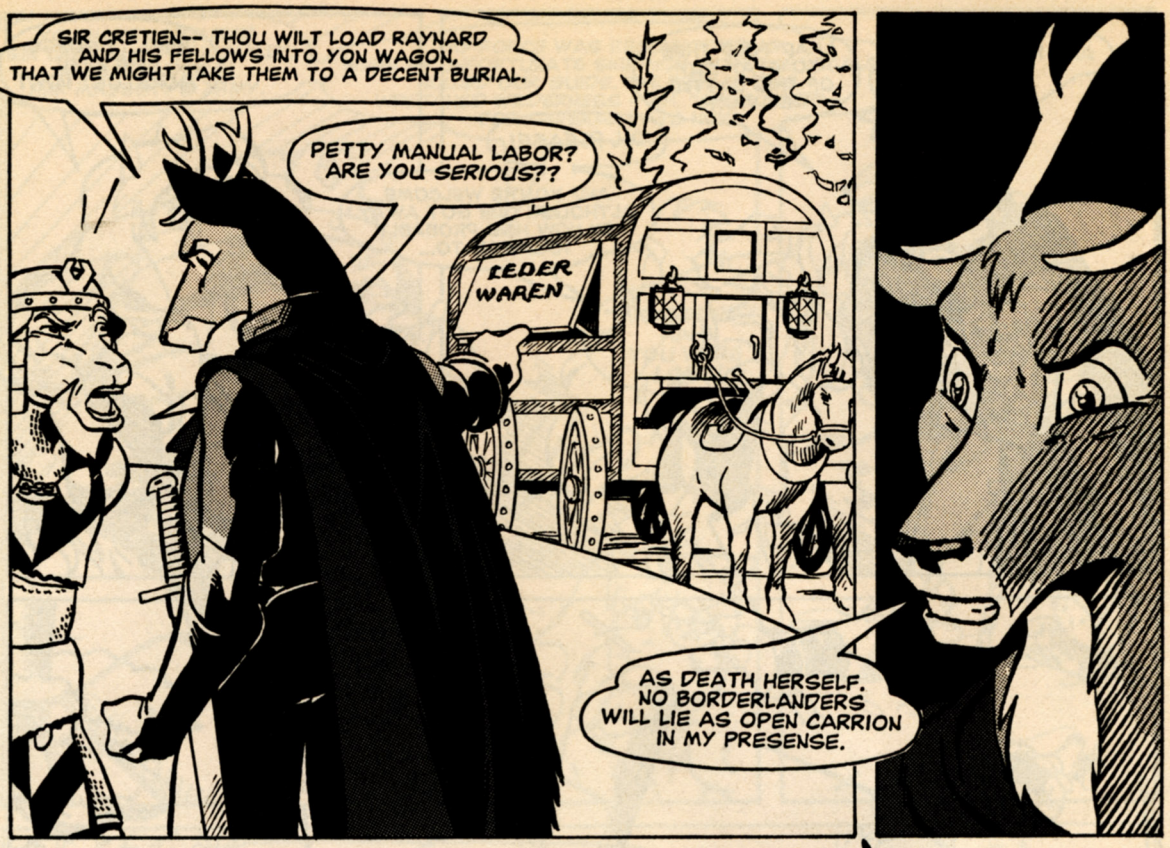

WELL, ALRIGHT, THEN-




AS I THOUGHT.
WHAT?? YOU WON'T-- "SPUTTER"-- YOU CAN'T--?

YOU HAVE CAPTURED "SIR CRETIEN DE GRAUVALD", A COMMANDER IN HER MAJESTY'S ARMY.
MY FORCE WAS RECONNOITERING, WHEN AN UNFORTUNATE SKIRMISH WITH THE LOCALS *KILLED* OUR GUIDE. I'VE BEEN IN THIS WRETCHED WILDERNESS --EH, "***MISGUIDED***"-- FOR SEVERAL DAYS NOW.
"MISGUIDED?" HAH! YOU WERE ***LOST!***
HMMM. AND *THIS* WILD-WOMAN WOULD BE YOUR MISTRESS? ...OR SERVANT?
MY - "ERM"- PRISONER.
"CHUCKLE" HOW DROLL.
WHAT REGIMENT DOST THOU SERVE? WHERE ARE THEY? WHAT IS THEIR CURRENT CAMPAIGN?
I CANNOT TELL YOU... ALTHOUGH, YOU ***COULD*** TRY *TORTURING* IT OUT OF ME, EH?
TEMPT ME NO FURTHER.

AND YOU..
I HAD TOLD THEE TO STAY OUT OF THIS BATTLE, ET VAR?
OH, PLEASE!
-AND YOU'RE WELCOME... ALTHOUGH ONE GOT AWAY. BY NOW HE'S PROBABLY HALFWAY TO...
WELL... I GUESS HE'S EVEN MORE LOST NOW!
...KARM AND ALL THE FATES...
THE BODIES...



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